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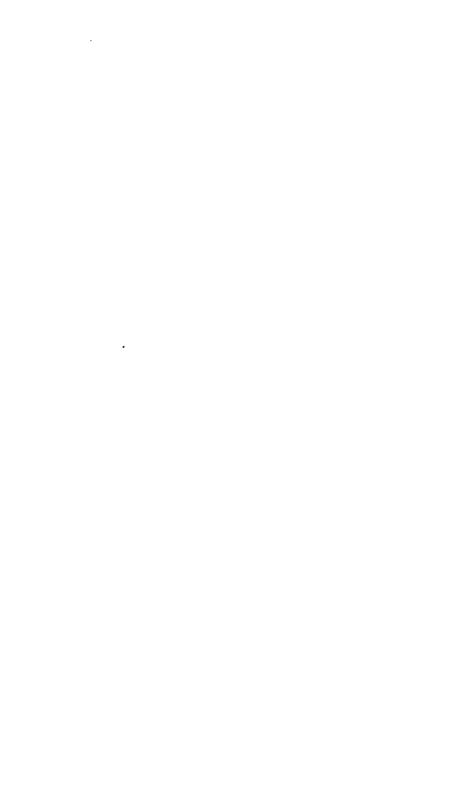
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THE SINS OF THE FATHERS



THE SINS OF THE FATHERS OR THE WYE VALLEY MYSTERY

By THOMAS WALTON

LONDON
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.
1908



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CHAPTER I

MR. AND MRS. MOORHOUSE

On the crest of a hill just beyond the northern suburbs of the city of Leeds stood a substantially built house known as Thorncliffe Hall. It was approached through an avenue of elms from the lodge gates, which were on the side of the main road leading into Wharfedale. No one passing by would have imagined that just beyond the belt of the thick hawthorn hedge, shrubbery, and trees—in summer-time white with the dust raised by passing motor-cars—there was such a delightful residence, or that from it such a magnificent view of the surrounding country could be obtained. The stables, kitchens, and the vegetable garden were between the house and the road, so that the noise of the traffic was scarcely heard by the occupants of the Hall. The grounds were tastefully laid out and well kept, falling in terraces southwards towards a valley in which nestled an old-time village.

When visitors entered Thorncliffe Hall they were impressed with the skill, elegance, and good taste everywhere displayed—in decorations, furniture, and even in the arrangement of the bricabrac. The general effect was pleasing and restful. There was nothing loud or gaudy, nothing to suggest extravagance, nothing to irritate or jar, but an air of culture and refinement

in every room.

This was the home of John Moorhouse, the head of one of the largest engineering firms in the North of England. It had been the home of two generations of the family. It was in the first place a plain, square, stone-walled structure, built by the first Moorhouse, the founder of the prosperous firm of Moorhouse and Son. Additions and alterations had been made from time to time, until the present 'Master John,' as he was called, had made it almost palatial, yet there was nothing

about it to suggest that the master was a spendthrift; it was simply an environment made by people of culture for comfort

and inspiration.

John Moorhouse was a little above the medium height, broad-shouldered, and robust, with short, grizzly beard of a sandy hue, and a clear, healthy complexion. His open, honest face was often wreathed with genial smiles. He was a man incapable of a mean thought or action, and his free, hearty, happy manner won him many friends, and made him popular among all classes. He was a far-seeing man of business—a man of sound judgment, who could strike a bargain as well as anyone in the city. He had for many years represented one of the wards on the City Council, and the electors knew that he was as careful with public money as with his own, or even more so.

There was never the slightest murmur among the workmen which was not listened to and taken into consideration, and if there was a legitimate cause for the murmur, the remedy was soon found and applied. If there were no just cause, the complainant was led by reason to see this, and the matter ended. Though a large employer of labour, John Moorhouse was a friend of the toilers, and they knew it.

For some years previous to the time our story opens Mr. Moorhouse had taken a keen interest and an active part in Church extension work, especially in the industrial parts of the city, and hundreds of working people were receiving spiritual ministrations and pastoral care through his munifi-He argued among his co-religionists that he did not consider it right or just for people to make money by the bone and muscle of the workers and treat them as if they were mere

automatic machines, without minds or souls.

Mr. Moorhouse's only son was following in his father's footsteps. He had the same business aptitude, the same sense of justice of what was right and wrong between master and man, the same diligence and perseverance in the work of the firm. He had early in life become interested in mission-work in the slums which surrounded their works, and in labouring to save others his own life had been kept pure, while the best that was in him had been developed and strengthened. So young Moorhouse grew to manhood with a knowledge of human nature that few in his position possess. He had a thorough knowledge of his business and also of his workmen; he was, in every sense of the word, competent to follow in his father's footsteps as head of the firm, and to hand down to succeeding generations the honoured name of Moorhouse untarnished and

unimpeachable.

Mrs. Moorhouse was a slenderly-built lady of medium height, with a clear, intellectual face and delicate appearance. She was now just recovering from a very severe illness, which had confined her to the house, and often to her bed, through the whole winter. About Christmas-time her life was trembling in the balance, and the doctors gave little hope of her recovery; but now, in the third week of February, she was much better, and able to come downstairs for lunch. Although the wind was very keen, the weather generally was fine and, to those in health, bracing. Mrs. Moorhouse was sitting with a book in her lap on a low chair close to the drawing-room fire; but it was quite clear that her mind was not centred on the book, for her countenance wore a look of anxiety. She raised her head rather languidly and murmured:

'It's about time that John was home,' glancing up at a

small timepiece on the mantelshelf.

Adjusting the knitted shawl round her shoulders, which in her reverie she had allowed to slip from one side, she stirred the fire into a blaze. As she did so, the horn of a motor-car told her that her husband was approaching, and in another moment she could hear the crunching of the wheels on the gravel of the drive as the car came whirring round the curve to the hall-door. She placed her finger upon an electric button, and in a few moments a servant appeared with an afternoon tea-tray, and Mr. Moorhouse came bustling in, just after, rubbing his hands. In a cheery voice he exclaimed:

'Well, little woman, how have you been to-day?'

'A little better, John, thank you,' she answered, as she raised her delicate face to his for the kiss of welcome.

John and his wife were still sweethearts, although they had been married nearly thirty years.

'Well, dear, I've settled it.'

'Settled what, John?' she asked, looking up at her husband in surprise, and holding a lump of sugar in the small silver tongs that she held in her thin fingers poised over one of the tiny cups.

She could see that he was very much agitated, and felt sure that something unusual had happened or was about to

happen.

Well, dear,' explained Mr. Moorhouse, 'you know that the

doctors agreed that if you got over your illness you would have to move further south. I thought over the matter a good deal, and came to the conclusion that I would talk it over privately with Herbert, and see if we could not come to some satisfactory arrangement. I feel that I can safely leave the business in his hands. You know that for many years it has been growing rapidly, and we have decided to float the concern as a limited company, with Herbert as managing director. offered the shares to the heads of the various departments at what I considered a reasonable figure, and they gladly accepted All has now been definitely settled, and no doubt the news will be in the Yorkshire Post to-morrow morning, so I thought I had better acquaint you with the facts of the case before your quick eyes found them out from the public press. I thought Herbert and his small family might occupy our dear old home, which we could then leave without the vexing thought of strangers coming in to tear down, pull up, and alter everything.'

The sugar had dropped from the tongs, which Mrs. Moorhouse was now resting upon the silver basin; her head was bent, her bosom heaving. When her husband ceased speaking, she looked up with loving eyes, in which glistened two

crystal teardrops, as she answered:

'John, this is too much for you to give up for my sake. I know the struggle this has cost you—to leave the business you have made so successful, the City Council where you are so much honoured, and the many tender associations which you have with the city of Leeds. I was thinking over the matter before you came in. I could not bear the thought of separation from you even for a few months, we have spent so many happy years together; but to expect you, in your prime, in robust health, to leave your business for my sake was too much to ask or even to think of. I do not deserve such self-denial.'

'My self-denial will be considerably greater if I do not get that cup of tea, wifie, which I have been expecting for the last

five minutes,' he interrupted playfully.

'I beg your pardon, dear,' she answered, as she began to fill one of the tiny cups. 'I know,' she went on, 'that once you have made up your mind it is useless to try to dissuade you from doing what you propose; but you have given up too much for my sake.'

'I could not give up too much for you, little woman. Do you forget that I owe to you very largely what I am or hope to

be? God has been very good to us, and I shall now give others a chance. I have no ambition to leave the earth a millionaire and enter heaven a pauper. I mean to give a few years now exclusively to moral and spiritual development, while I share

with you the quiet of a country life.'

'I like your idea, John, and I shall be delighted to join you. We can read and study and work together. I have been sitting here thinking this afternoon of the South Country, and wondering if the children of my sister Eveline are still alive. I sometimes fear that my father was a little too severe with Charlie. If he had tried to understand him, to get to know his temperament, much trouble might have been avoided; but he seemed to have no thought for his domestic affairs after dear mother died. I know that you did what you could to

keep Charlie straight, but all was evidently in vain.'

'I have often wondered what became of the children,' said her husband. 'There were a boy and a girl, I believe, who must be quite grown up by this time if they are alive. I haven't met Kepworth for years, and I don't suppose I could get much out of him if I went to see him. You know he blamed us for the whole affair. I have no wish to be uncharitable or unkind, but my blood has often boiled when I have thought of gentle, affectionate, amiable Eveline being dragged down—down, no one knows to what depths—by the intemperate, gambling, and dissolute habits of the man who ought to have been a source of comfort and help. He had many opportunities to reform; he knew there was only one end to the life he was leading. But what I blamed him most for was leading Eveline and all of us to believe that he was living an upright, sober life, and at the same time running the pace with as fast a set as there is to be found in Bradford. I have often wondered when in London if I should drop across him, or hear anything about him or the children. It is some years since any account of his work appeared in the papers which were once so loud in his praise.'

Here the conversation was interrupted by the sound of

some one jumping on to the gravel outside.

'Why, here's Mr. Bowen come upon his bicycle,' exclaimed Mr. Moorhouse.

CHAPTER II

MR. BOWEN

MR. Bowen was curate-in-charge of a large mission-church and extensive working-class district surrounding the works of Moorhouse and Son. He was a young man of high ideals, spiritually-minded, tender and sympathetic, and he manifested a humble and self-sacrificing spirit in all his labours. He did not go about the parish on stilts, or speak down patronizingly to the people from some sublime height of social greatness. Homeliness was one of his chief characteristics. He was not in the ministry to be fêted and flattered, and to be made the altar on which the adulation and incense of his people were to be laid; but, paradoxical though it may seem, the more selfabnegation he manifested, the more he obtained the affection and honour of his parishioners. He was constantly at work, comforting the sorrowful, assisting the weak, sustaining the burdened, directing the perplexed, and cheering the disconsolate.

His chief joy was in winning souls for Christ. He never pandered to popular tastes, never deviated from what he thought the right path, or hesitated in delivering the message that he believed had been given him by God. He was a born leader of men, tactful and long-suffering, and the workers that rallied round him were prepared to follow him wherever he led them. His enthusiasm seemed to infect all who came near him.

Mr. Bowen had heard the startling news that Mr. Moorhouse was about to leave them. He knew, of course, what the doctors had said; yet he persuaded himself that Mrs. Moorhouse would only go south for a few months to recruit, and then return to her old home. He never dreamt for a moment that they would think of making their abode else-

where. However, he had decided to run up and get to know the truth. He had generally visited Mrs. Moorhouse twice a week during her illness, but he had not heard a word spoken regarding a move.

' Just in time for a cup of tea, Mr. Bowen,' said Mrs. Moor-

house, as he entered the drawing-room.

'Thank you. It's rather a hard pull up to these Alpine regions on the machine, and this north wind certainly sharpens one's appetite.'

'I once heard a man say that to be hungry was the normal

condition of preachers,' said Mr. Moorhouse, smiling.

'No doubt,' he answered, 'for some of them have a great difficulty in getting out of that condition, thanks to the liberality of the laity.'

'Well said, Mr. Bowen!' exclaimed Mrs. Moorhouse.

'Now, John, I think you're bowled out.'

'We'll try to get you out of it somehow, young man, but you'll need more than these samples, I'm afraid. Will you stay to dinner?' asked Mr. Moorhouse.

Well, I have the evening free, fortunately, and as I may not be able to spend many more with you, I had better make the

best of the little time that remains.

'So you've heard the news?'

'I have, I'm sorry to say; but surely it is not true that you

are going to move to the South of France?'

'The South of France! I should think not. Whatever put that into your wise head?' asked Mr. Moorhouse.

'I heard it for Gospel truth.'

'Well, all I can say is, that if Gospel truth was like that the Higher Critics would have a fine time of it. No, we are not thinking of going to France, but further south in our own

country.

'That is bad enough, but the other was unbearable. I might get to see you sometimes, as it is; but if you had crossed the Channel I might never have seen you again. cannot tell you how much I shall miss you and Mrs. Moorhouse. I have come here so many times depressed and discouraged, and gone away with a light heart. I have brought many a difficult parochial problem and returned with the tangled skein straightened out. It has been the one redeeming feature of my life in Leeds—to get away from the smoke and sulphur emitted from the works of Messrs. Moorhouse and Son to Thorncliffe, where all is so restful and inspiring.'

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Very complimentary to the firm, Mr. Bowen; but perhaps i'll still have a free pass to Thorncliffe.'

How can that be?

Mr. Moorhouse then told him of the arrangements he had de at the works, and that he had practically settled with son that he should return to the old home.

This will not mean that Herbert will no longer work with

in the parish?'

As usual, work first, self second. Well, after all, your art's in the right place, young man. With regard to rbert, I think the work of the parish is as much a part of life as Thorncliffe. Of course, he will be much further ay, but he will always have his car, so you need not fear t our arrangements will separate David and Jonathan.'

Nothing will separate Herbert and myself; but I had a mentary fear, which I see is groundless, regarding our rk. I cannot tell how much I shall miss your counsel and rice. You know parsons have not a reputation for business lity. Then, your personal influence is so great, and the s of it will be felt by all, even by Herbert and myself.'

I have foreseen all this, Mr. Bowen, and I feel it as keenly you all, perhaps more so, but it must be —and here Mr.

ing impulse pointed towards Surrey I might account for it, for we think that we have a nephew and niece in that locality. I confess that I have been greatly puzzled—yes, bewildered; but I have made up my mind to start out early on Wednesday morning on a voyage of discovery. It's rather late in life to turn explorer, but I'm going to attempt it. My wife insists for my sake that we must have a country with some hills, so that I may get some bracing air 'while she remains in the quiet shady lanes of the valley, with the balmy breezes gently fanning her pale cheeks. I had thought of Warwickshire or Surrey as most suitable for her, but she insists on having a place that will suit both. I want, if possible, to buy an old manor-house, well shielded with trees, to keep the north-east winds away; and being somewhat of an antiquarian turn of mind. I should like a district that has some historic interest.'

'If this ideal spot is found, you must come down and spend your holidays with us, or any time when you feel a little dull,'

said Mrs. Moorhouse.

'Thanks; I shall be delighted to do so. I am only afraid

that fits of dullness may come on very often.'

'And when you do come we'll have a helpmeet ready for you to bring back, who will take care of you, seeing that you have no longer my wife to mother you,' said Mr. Moorhouse cheerily.

'John, don't tease,' interposed his wife.

She had little idea that this playful promise would be fulfilled.

The gong sounded at this moment for dinner.

'Well!' exclaimed Mr. Bowen, 'I had forgotten that I had no lamp on my bicycle, and I shall have to walk home if I stay to dinner.'

'No, you won't. I'll drive you home in the car, and you can call up early to-morrow morning for your machine. A good walk before breakfast will give you an appetite,' said Mr.

Moorhouse, with a merry twinkle in his eye.

'Don't think that business men are the only ones that get about before the streets are aired. Many of the clergy could probably give you a start in this, as well as the length of time they keep at work.'

'Hear, hear, Mr. Bowen!' said Mrs. Moorhouse, as they entered the dining-room. 'It is not in the early rising, but in

the well spending of the day.'

When Mr. Moorhouse returned from driving Mr. Bowen

epting his road-maps into the waste-papeated to himself: 'There's a divinity that sh-hew them how we will.' He bowed, or shall we rather say the hand of I twards proved to be.

CHAPTER III

MOOR HOUSE

THE servants at Thorncliffe wondered what could be the matter when breakfast was ordered for half-past six. had noticed that their master had not been like his usual self during the past few days. He was usually hearty, genial, and even boisterous; but of late he had worn an anxious look had been worried, restless, and even irritable. He was usually a man of decision, who could make up his mind and act at once; but he was now face to face with a difficulty that seemed almost insuperable. He was moving in the dark; he knew not where he was going, and he had no definite objective. He had made up his mind fully the previous evening, and given orders to his chauffeur to be ready punctually at seven; but now that the time had arrived to make the plunge, his mind was again agitated with conflicting thoughts. He partook very sparingly of breakfast, for he had no appetite; he made an attempt to eat, but the bread was like chaff, and the ham made him feel sick. He toyed with his knife and fork for some time, then pushed back his chair irritably, and rushed upstairs to bid farewell to his wife. When he came down he was quite calm and collected. The car was waiting, his portmanteau and bags had been put in, and all was ready.

We'll drive straight to Birmingham,' he said decisively in

his ordinary business-like way.

As the car glided round the curve of the drive he waved another good-bye to his wife, who was standing at her bedroom window. As he passed close to his works, all the old associations came surging into his mind, and, lost in thought and memories of the past, he was oblivious of his surroundings until they had got beyond Doncaster, when he began to take a lively interest in the objects they passed. They arrived in Birmingham in good time for lunch. The keen frosty air had sharpened his

appetite, and he did full justice to a good meal. He had bought a guide to Malvern and its neighbourhood at a large stationer's shop in New Street, and while he was having his

cigar he looked it over.

This is just the place,' he thought, 'that I should likeplenty of historical and geological interest here. If this picture is not overdrawn, the situation and scenery will be admirable. This is just the place that my wife described as being suitable for both.' After half an hour's rest and reading he jumped up impatiently, saying to himself: 'I must be off to see this place. I hope I shall be able to find a suitable house.'

The sun was just beginning to settle behind what seemed almost precipitous hills as he approached the little residential He had made up his mind to hire a horse at once. and ride round to view the land before dark. The car was run into the vard of an hotel; he ordered a horse to be ready in fifteen minutes, and stepped inside to have a little refresh-While he was thus engaged the proprietor plied the chauffeur with a number of questions. The horse was got ready, and in half an hour Mr. Moorhouse was riding quietly up the steep zigzag road which led to the summit of the hill.

'Delightful!' he kept on repeating, as he ascended higher and higher. 'A house on the south side of this hill will do splendidly—couldn't be better,' he thought. When he reached the summit he took out his powerful field-glasses to view the landscape. From the towering, almost precipitous, hills a wellwooded plain stretched as far as eye could reach, varied with slight undulations and low ranges of hills here and there. The trees were scarcely beginning to bud. 'Yet,' he thought, 'in summer-time this will look like a monster garden in its fertility and prolific vegetation.' Here and there nestling among the trees were large houses, where many a business-man was enjoying a well-earned rest, and, perhaps, many young people growing up in idleness to squander the fortunes amassed by the strenuous labours and rigid self-denials of their greyheaded sires. Rising in the distance were little clouds of smoke, indicating a small town or village; and not far away could be clearly discerned the tall spires and chimneys of the city of Worcester.

As Mr. Moorhouse surveyed this scene he was strongly tempted to go no further, yet he had an uneasy thought that this was not to be his abiding-place.

'I will look out for a house, or an available building site

where a suitable one might be erected,' he said half aloud, as if wishing for some one to reply and help him to decide, for still the voice within said unmistakably: 'Your home is not here, but still further afield.'

As the setting sun was sinking in the west behind a range of hills he could clearly discern in the far distance, the clouds had formed themselves into all kinds of fantastic shapes. But one darker and more conspicuous than the rest was formed like a huge hand with finger pointing westward where the sun had just dropped out of sight, though its rays still tinged the small clouds round the great black hand with amber and gold, bringing out more prominently the object which had drawn his attention, and it seemed to say: 'This is the way; walk thou in it.'

Mr. Moorhouse returned to his hotel, and after dinner sat long in serious thought pondering over the strange impulse within. He had made sure that this was the place, but now it was more difficult to decide than ever. He came to the conclusion at last that he would make inquiries on the following morning, and if no suitable house was in the market, he would take it as a final answer and seek fortune further ahead, and not trouble about a site.

After lunch on the following day the car might have been seen tearing along the road towards Hereford, where Mr. Moorhouse arrived about four o'clock. He drove up to one of the hotels, had a cup of tea, and afterwards strolled round the town until dinner. During dinner he overheard a conversation between two men sitting at the other end of the table. He could not understand much of their conversation, for they spoke with an accent that he had never heard before, and they sometimes spoke with their mouths full of food. However, he gathered enough to rouse his curiosity. It appeared that some person or persons were 'foolish, idiotic, mad,' in some small, sleepy town, about twenty miles up the valley, called 'Hey,' or 'Eh,' for this might not have been the name at all. but only an exclamation when one had not understood the 'Large manor-house for sale by private treaty—good land—well watered—well wooded—timber would fetch a good deal-would be sold no doubt dirt cheap-the people had no money—poor as rooks.' Mr. Moorhouse did not care to enter into conversation with these men, as they were imbibing more wine than he thought was good for them, so sauntered out to see if his chauffeur was attending to some part of the

THE SINS OF THE FATHERS

achinery of the car which needed attention. In the passage met the proprietor of the hotel, a burly blue-eyed, red-faced, osely-cropped, clean-shaven, corpulent, and genial-looking dividual—a true type of his class. After a word or two out the weather, Mr. Moorhouse asked if there was a town ywhere in that locality of some such name as 'Hey' or th'?

'Yes, there is,' he answered, 'about twenty-one miles up the ye Valley—a quiet little place, a fair market, not much doing nerally, people not enterprising, very much behind the nes; only two hotels—one fair, the other died with the stage ach, and ought to have been buried with it; no 'lectric light,

-nothing like the city of Hereford.'

Mr. Moorhouse ventured to say that he was glad to find him patriotic. This was a very inspiration, and set the man on ain double quick about the cathedral, the jail, the asylum, d all the other places that he thought would interest a prorist. When he stopped to take breath, Mr. Moorhouse sed if there was not to be a sale of property in this place up a valley shortly.

Well, yes; I heard some of my customers talking about it en they were up to market yesterday. Wednesday is our positively cutting to one less constitutionally strong. Mr. Moorhouse, however, was braced up by it. It quickened his pulse, deepened the ruddy glow upon his countenance, and made him look the very picture of health.

He had a strange feeling of satisfaction that he was nearing the end of his journey. His doubts, perplexities, and anxious

thoughts were gone—he could not tell how or where.

He had been travelling at a moderate pace for some time, looking about him and admiring the scenery on every hand, the river on one side of the road and the railway on the other—now near, now farther apart. Suddenly the three converged, the river flowing close to the side of the highway on the left, and the railway passing on the high bank on the right. The car was pulled up with a jerk. Mr. Moorhouse, who had been looking at the river and the large farmstead on the opposite bank, looked ahead, and saw, to his astonishment, a gate closed across the road in front of them. This was one of the old toll-gates still remaining in the country.

At the sound of the motor-horn an old woman came out of

the small cottage built on the side of the bridge.

'What's this obstruction placed across the road for, my woman? You'll be charged with manslaughter one of these days.'

Eh? squeaked the woman in an unmusical tone.

'What's the charge, my good woman?'

'Charge! Well, if you two gents be going to push that 'ere thing through it's sixpence-halfpenny—fourpence-halfpenny for the thing, and one penny each for you; if the thing be going to take you through, the charge will be fourpence-halfpenny.'

'Oh, I see, you charge the poor beggars double who have been unfortunate enough to have a breakdown. All right, my

woman, here's a sixpence.'

They sped on for about two miles, and passed through a picturesque little village. A gentle incline for about a mile beyond brought them to the top of a hill, from which they could see a small town about three-quarters of a mile in front of them.

'Slow down,' said Mr. Moorhouse to his man, who instantly

obeyed, and they went gently down the hill.

Just before they entered the town they noticed some lodge gates on the left, on each side of which was a poster, which seemed out of all harmony with the rustic appearance of the surroundings.

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Another piece of modern deformity. Even these out-of-way places cannot escape it evidently, said Mr. Moorhouse himself, for he had an artist's eye and taste.

Stop! he said suddenly, startling the chauffeur at his side. ack a little. Hullo! who's been taking my name in vain? In bold type the poster was headed:

MOOR HOUSE ESTATE.

TO BE SOLD BY PRIVATE TREATY.

Mr. Moorhouse read the bill, and said to himself:

Just the place, just the neighbourhood.'

He drove gently onward past a large timber-yard, where the did not seem to be much business done. Near it was estation, at the west end of which the river was spanned by high, well-built iron bridge, which crossed the railway as well the river, and connected the town with Radnorshire. About y feet above the level of the river was an old town wall, ich carried the mind back to the old feudal times, when ght was right and people had to fight for their existence, as by have to do now in another way. At the foot of the hill is a brook, or River Dulas, as it was called, which joined the ve close to the railway-station. This rivulet divided England

" But surely you don't object to motor-cars?' said Mr. Moor-

house good-humouredly.

'Not I. I was only voicing the sentiments of the farmers generally, because they think the cars are going to damage the horse trade. I have often thought that I should like a trip in one.'

Mr. Moorhouse was very much impressed with the strong features of the young man before him. His aquiline nose, broad forehead, black, flashing eyes, the sensitive quiver of the lips, and bold chin, at once proclaimed a man of high imaginative power and strength of character—qualities which do not always go together, but, when they do, enable a man to do a great deal of good or harm. This man was stamped with the hall-mark of genius, and Mr. Moorhouse breathed a prayer that his powers might be used for good. I must do what I can, he thought, to direct and help him.'

'You may have an opportunity before long, if I settle in this neighbourhood, as I believe I shall. It seems as though we are going to have a storm,' he said, as he stepped further out into the yard to get a better view of the sky.

'Yes; I may as well put my horse into more permanent quarters, and make up my mind to stay here for some hours, at

any rate.'

Do you live far from here?

'No, only just over a mile. I suppose you are a stranger to this place?'

'Yes; I came down from the North on a hunting expedi-

tion.'

A comical expression came over the young man's face as he replied:

'I don't think you'll find any bears or tigers in these parts,

unless you're willing to accept two-legged specimens.'

'I'm not hunting in that sense, but my wife has had a very serious illness, and the doctor has ordered her South, and as I've had about enough of business, I'm seeking some quiet place where we can settle down and I can find time to form a closer acquaintance with my beloved authors.'

This was a random shot which he hoped might reach the mark. Nor was he disappointed, for he saw a flash of pleasure

cross the young man's face.

'Will you come in and have a drink?' he asked.

'No, thank you,' answered Mr. Moorhouse, with a tender-

ness of expression that caused the young man to start, his eyes

to drop, and his face to flush.

There seemed to be a mysterious affinity between these two strangers which neither could define or explain. We have all had the feeling more or less—to some we have been attracted, by others we have been repelled. Though Mr. Moorhouse little thought how much his life was to be affected by this youth before him, nor how great his influence over this impetuous character was going to be, one feeling he had at present, and only one, which was to try and direct his genius into right paths, and help him to make the best of his life.

Mr. Moorhouse drew out his card-case and handed the stranger one of his cards. The compliment was returned, and he read: 'Richard Llewellyn, the Manor-House, Cusop, Hay,

Herefordshire.'

'Now, Mr. Llewellyn, I'm going to give you an invitation, and I hope your reply will not be like mine. The rain is coming on, and we are likely to have a heavy storm. Will you take lunch with me? I'm all alone. It will give me great pleasure if you will join me.'

'I say, Mr. Moorhouse, you're not one of those teetotal

fanatics, are you?'

'I'm sorry to say that I cannot lay claim to any such virtue, but, at the same time, I take very little, and I never make a practice of sitting drinking in an hotel. Will you come?'

'Yes, I'll come,' he answered with decision.

They entered the hotel. Lunch was ordered, and they went and sat down by the fire until it was ready. Mr. Moorhouse, with commendable tact, followed up his random shot by asking his new friend if he had read a book which had just been

published and was all the talk in literary circles.

'I cannot say that I have,' he answered. The cloud came over his face again for a moment, but was immediately dispelled by tremendous force of will. 'I read the reviews of it in the papers, and enjoyed the extracts very much. I have wondered if the author was rich, and could pull the wires in Fleet Street and elsewhere, so as to have the book boomed. But, whether boomed or not, I believe it will be widely read; there is real merit in it.'

'You said just now that you had not read the book, so I presume that you do not possess a copy. You also said how much you had enjoyed the extracts, and that showed me that it would give you real pleasure to read the whole. I believe one

of the chief duties of life is to try and make others happy.' As Mr. Moorhouse said this, he was opening one of his bags. Drawing out a copy, he said: 'I have a copy here, which I have read, and you can have it with pleasure.'

The young man's lip quivered as he replied huskily:

'Thank you.'

Mr. Moorhouse was convinced that there was some secret sorrow in the life of this youth, some tragedy perhaps hidden far away in his deep nature. They chatted in a friendly way during lunch, and when cigars were lit, the conversation grew quite animated, and their hearts warmed to each other. They had the room to themselves, for the torrential rain kept people indoors.

'So you have read the Fleet Street Magazine, Mr. Moor-

house, and the articles by Dick Stylograph?

'Yes, and if I am not very much mistaken, I have now the

pleasure of the company of that same Dick!'

Dick's face flushed crimson, and he seemed for a moment very confused; for a young author is like a young mother—as fond of his first articles or book as she of her first baby.

'Allow me to congratulate you and to thank you for them,'

said Mr. Moorhouse heartily.

This led on to questions of authorship, writing, and publishing. Mr. Moorhouse did his best to cheer this young man, for he became more and more convinced that he had some grave trouble or difficulty with which he was grappling, and he longed to give him a helping hand. He had not long to wait for his opportunity. There was a lull in the conversation, which had gone on briskly for nearly an hour. Presently Llewellyn rose and went to the window, and stood for a few moments watching the rain come down in torrents, cold and pitiless. He came back and poked the fire as a man will do when his mind is in a state of agitation, when he has something disagreeable within which he wants to communicate.

'So you are thinking of making a bid for Moor House?' he said at last, adding with a playful smile: 'No, I didn't mean to pun on your name. A strange coincidence, though—very strange.'

'Yes, Mr. Llewellyn----'

'Oh, excuse me interrupting you. Mr. Moorhouse, but don't "Mr." me, please. I'm Dick to you—"Mad Dick," as some fools call me—if you like.'

'Not "Mad Dick," but Dick, if you so wish it. Yes, you

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Il think fact far stranger than your fiction when I tell you the bry of the beginning and also the progress of my present arney. I have thought a great deal about it, but the more I ink the more inexplicable it becomes.'

Then he gave Dick the history of his journey, his doubts, nflicts, and finally the feeling that he had reached his

stination.

'There's a Divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them w we will, repeated Dick, more to himself than to other ears, hen Mr. Moorhouse had finished.

'Amen,' responded the elder man, as he began to get a

mpse of what he believed to be one Divine purpose.

'Now, about Moor House,' said Dick, still toying with the ker, and looking into the fire.

Well?' responded Mr. Moorhouse, with a feeling of curiosity

rdering on anxiety.

I suppose you don't know anything about the circumstances lich are connected with this sale?'

'I know nothing, but I should be deeply indebted to you you could tell me all there is to be known about this matter, at any rate all that affects the sale and purchase.'

'Sale and purchase,' repeated Dick—'sale and purchase.'
Then he rose quickly and stood, with his back to the fire,

'Yes. The man may have speculated and lost heavily, and, at the same time, spent more than he could afford in whisky; but the general opinion is that old Parchment is always alive to business, and never misses his chance.'

'He keeps sober and level-headed, I suppose?'

'Sober! sober! By Jove, no! he drinks like a fish; but still his brain is as clear as any man's in town.'

'I suppose your warning is that I have to take care that he

does not fleece me, as he has evidently done others?

'Well, it's just this. I've heard that Parchment has had one or two heavy losses lately, and must sell this property for what it will fetch. At the same time, if he can get a fancy price and recoup himself he's going to do it; but he's not had a single bid yet, so far as I can hear. He is too well known.'

If you had had as many years in the business world as I have, Dick, you would find that there are many old Parchments beside this one, if that's his game; but I'm afraid that you

are somewhat prejudiced against this man.'

'Prejudiced! That isn't the word which expresses my feelings, and if you knew all you would share them, I know, for you hate dishonourable actions as much as I do. Mr. Moorhouse, I feel I must tell you my life's story. I believe you will help me, and advise me right. I have a strange feeling that you are going to have a powerful influence upon my life. I cannot help it. I don't want to oppose it.'

CHAPTER IV

DICK'S STORY

v ancestral home,' began Dick, 'was in bygone days the rman castle of Cusop, which dates back to the reign of ward II. One of my worthy ancestors was an adherent of Earl of Lancaster in the Barons' Wars, and took part in the ner summary act of justice by which the 'favourite of ward II. lost his life on the scaffold. The King pardoned a, but could not detach him from the Baronial party; and followed the Earl of Hereford, who had joined Lancaster, his opposition to the Dispensers, and again committed onies for which he needed and obtained the royal pardon.

circumstance happened in their courtship which threatened to break the tie. The young damsel had been spending the afternoon over at our old place, and on her way home in the evening, as she was about to pass through the town, she was attracted by a crowd of people collected on what is known as Black Lion Green. Being curious to know what was the matter, she trotted her pony to the edge of the small hollow, where she could see and hear what took place.

'She found that it was a man preaching—one of the co-workers of George Whitefield and John Wesley. The man of God, as her diary says, stood like an Apostle, pleading with and warning the people who stood round him. She had shown previous to this no religious inclinations whatever. She was a wild, rollicking young damsel, who could ride with any man in a hunting expedition, and was always in at the death, often getting the brush. The circumstance of this gathering, being so unconventional and novel, struck her fancy, and she listened attentively to what the man had to say. The story goes that his face shone with a celestial light. His earnestness and what you would call spiritual power profoundly impressed her mind and pierced her heart. Curiosity was turned into deep concern. She listened, the record says, and was convicted of She saw that the life she was leading was worthless and wicked, and got so agitated that she nearly fell from the saddle. When the preacher was evidently reaching his climax, and making a most passionate appeal for the people to forsake their sins and lead godly lives, some of the roughs in the crowd hurled stones at him, one of which struck him violently on the head, felling him to the ground. As he lay dying he prayed, like Stephen of old, "Lay not this sin to their charge." asked that his murderer or murderers might not be punished for this mad act, but that the matter might be left in the hands of God.

'This so impressed the mind of the squire's daughter that she was never the same again. This was the turning-point in her life. She rode quietly home, lost in bewildering thoughts, went at once to the library, and, after some searching, found a Bible and retired to her room.

'The next evening her sweetheart rode over to see her, as he had not been at home when she had called on the previous day. He noticed at once that there was something mysteriously different in the lady of his choice. I don't know how it is, but there seems to have been some mysterious mark of

- PILTgut nave married him. With th went to the stables, got his horse, a spin started off at a fearful gallop. About an riderless horse was seen walking quietly up t It was at once recognized and the town. Search parties were got together as soon a going one way, some another, and one of young squire lying on his back at the botto quarry, apparently dead. Medical aid was propossible. Gradually he regained consciousness home. No one asked him how he got into this His reputation for wild, mad exploits w place. His sweetheart heard of the accide sufficient. ing the cause of it, was greatly troubled, and prayer for help, she summoned up courage to go They had a long talk together; he admitted made many fair promises of amendment if ever After a few weeks, thanks to a strong constitution to get about again. He was much more sober a formerly. In due course the old squire died. It among the servants and parishioners that he ha self to death. He had Christian burial, and wit his body was laid in the old family vault. As s

olemn event as was decent, the worthy couple old you of were married. The bride said she pet near the Martyr's Grave—he was buried

surchyard, under an old vew-trace

poor and needy. For some time she was able to keep her husband fairly steady and somewhere near his promise, but he gradually drifted or sank—whichever term you choose to use—until he openly began bull-baiting, gambling, and drinking as much as any of his forebears. They had children, and, as far as I can learn, some went to the bad, others to the good. So it has been all along the line; but there has only been one squire in whom the religious element was predominant, and he was killed in an unfortunate accident with a spirited horse. There seems to be a curse upon our line. Of the younger sons, some went into the Church, some into the medical profession, and some into the army. I tell you, we're a strange mixture of the good and bad.'

'That applies in every family, I think,' Mr. Moorhouse ventured to say.

'Yes, that is so,' Dick went on, 'but I think more especially are these conflicting elements in ours. I must proceed with my narrative. My father followed in the footsteps of the majority of his ancestors, and eventually was laid beside them in our little churchyard, where also lies our sainted mother. I tell you, Mr. Moorhouse, she was a saint, and no mistake; and I believe, if the truth were known, she, too, spent many a midnight hour beside the Martyr's Grave. My brother, the present squire, is not married, but in every other respect is following in the footsteps of my father. At the present moment he is confined to his room with delirium tremens. and I fear there will be serious consequences. When I came down from Cambridge I found my sister Ruth in great trouble. and everything going to the dogs. My brother, who is not quite thirty years of age, is a broken, shattered wreck. knew that during his college course he had been among a very fast set, but I thought he would settle down and do better when father died and he took the responsibility of our affairs. I found my hopes dashed to the ground. He had been a good deal up in town, and squandered no end of money in gambling, drinking, and fast living generally. My mother had kept things together fairly well, and when father died, five years ago, we were, I believe, well off. I could never have dreamt that things could have got into such a state in so short a time. He had engaged old Parchment as his agent, to look after his interests at home while he was away. I never had a good opinion of this man, and my sister agreed with me in this; but when I began to make inquiries, I was told to mind and always implied that I had a selfish r. me to the quick. Being of a sensitive na temperament, it was almost more than I it not been for my sister, we should, no ilike brutes.

'I did not care to add to the already hea could not spend my time in idleness, so I be a few articles to the Fleet Street Magazin editor courteous and kind, and I was well p I have been sending up a little occasionally for able time. I only work in fits and starts, when my brother and I cross swords, it upset for days. I know you will blame me, but I m my narration of facts. I often try to drown n in drink. I know it only makes bad worse, bu I don't like to take anything at home; if add considerably to Ruth's troubles, which a and numerous enough. Some of the wiseacres town call me "Mad Dick," and say that I am fellow. This week my brother has been we and do what she could, my sister was not a toxicants from him; he has never been so room.

'I have watched my opportunity to look ove find things worse, much worse, than I ev heavily in debt to old Parch honour, no conscience. He's nothing to lose: he only does hack work; but, judging from appearances, I should say it pays best.'

It will not pay in the long run if it be dishonest,' said

Mr. Moorhouse.

'Perhaps not,' answered Dick; 'but if it pays while we are

ruined, that is everything to us.'

'You shall not be ruined nor turned out, my boy, so make your mind easy on that point. If you will promise me one thing I'll be your friend and help you in every way I possibly can. Will you resist the temptation to drown your trouble in drink?'

There was silence for a few moments; then Dick turned to Mr. Moorhouse, and, with a determined look upon his face,

said:

'I promise.'

Mr. Moorhouse knew what this promise had cost, and would cost, the young man before him. He gripped him by the hand, as much as to say: 'Don't fear; I'll hold you up.'

The two men looked at each other for a moment, then the

elder said:

'Now, I have one more question to ask: What is this estate worth, and what is the fancy price that has been put

upon it?

"What I am going to tell you is private information, mark you. I was not eavesdropping when I heard it. I was calling upon Parchment to ask a few questions, and I heard someone talking when I was at the foot of the narrow stair. I did not care to interrupt the conversation, and I could not help hearing what was said, though I never thought it would be of any use. A man was just leaving, and standing with the door on the upper landing half open. I heard Parchment say: "I'm in a tight corner, but if some city man turns up with plenty of money, and anxious for the place, I think I can squeeze forty thousand pounds out of him for it. Of course, the actual value is not more than thirty thousand pounds, and I should take this rather than allow it to remain on my hands." "Well," replied the other man, "if anyone is capable of getting the fancy price, you are." And with a loud laugh he began to come heavily down the stairs.'

'Thank you. Now that things are clearer, my mind is made up what to do. I see the storm is over; it is not raining much

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v. Go, get your horse and ride quietly home—not as Iad Dick" this time, but as a sedate, scholarly journalist. keep my car out of sight, and I don't look much of a toff this rig-out. Don't say anything about me to anyone unless remember me kindly to your sister. Come and lunch with to-morrow, after which I shall make an afternoon call on it sister. Good-bye.'

CHAPTER V

THE MOOR HOUSE ESTATE CHANGES OWNERS

DICK went home with a lighter heart and a clearer brain than he had done for some time past. He found his sister sitting with some needlework in her lap and her work-basket on the rug at her side; but it was quite evident that she was not doing much, for her clasped hands were resting upon her knees, and she was looking sadly into the fire, which was burning low in the grate. When her brother entered the room, she turned her head quickly with a mingled look of fear, surprise, and sorrow in her large black eyes, no doubt expecting to see his face flushed and his eyes glowing with the fires of intoxication. As she looked into his face, however, her fears vanished, the cloud seemed to lift.

'See what I've brought,' he said, as he held out the book

which Mr. Moorhouse had given him.

'Oh, Dick, this will be a real pleasure!' she exclaimed. Then the cloud settled again as she added: 'Do you really think that we can afford it?'

'Yes, I'm perfectly sure we can—at the price. I've had it

given to me.'

'Given! I was not aware that we had such generous friends in the parish.'

'The donor is not a parishioner, but I hope he soon

will be.

He then went on to tell her of his meeting with Mr. Moorhouse.

'Does he drink?' questioned Ruth anxiously.

'No, by Jove! I am afraid that I put my foot in it by suggesting a glass.'

'I'm so glad,' she answered, with emphasis.

'Your heart will rejoice more still when I tell you that he is

opinions down people's throats, whethe or not.'

'You say you like this man?'

'I do; I cannot help it.'

'I'm so glad, Dick. To tell you the trut anxious about you lately. I have been afr get to like intoxicants as much as Henry de what happened this morning, I did not exp to-night, and then I dreaded your home-com

'I am afraid that your fears would have b if I had not met with this gentleman. Now fears depart, for almost before I knew what I me to promise that I would abstain from all in

'Thank God!'

Dick was almost ashamed to repeat what hi—'Amen'—for he had to confess on his wa had only just made that promise in time. If h much longer his will-power would have been

on, saying:

'I don't know whether it is hypnotism, or te—perhaps you would say that it is answer to perhaps you would say that it is answer to perhaps you will, but this man, I believe, it tell you, it seems that he can make me wishes. I have always been considered structured willed, and almost uncontrollable; but this mapparent effort, makes me feel like some in his hands. He has see

'Why, I thought they were great "pals." They have drunk enough whisky together, at any rate. I should have thought he would have welcomed old Thirdly, if only for the sake of livening him up a bit. He's always so jolly.'

'Ah, Dick! I am sure that when a man knows that he is nearing his end he wants something more than whisky or

common jest can give.'

'Well, Thirdly is a parish priest, and can administer the

Sacraments.'

'Henry needs a change of heart before the Sacraments, Dick. I should tremble at the thought of his receiving Holy Communion until he has repented and confessed his sins to God and obtained Divine forgiveness.'

'Old Thirdly would see that he confessed before he gave

him the Sacrament.'

- 'Do you think that Henry is so blind or so weak-minded as to confess to a man who is, I am sorry to say, very little better than himself?'
 - 'You are rather rough on old Thirdly, Ruth.'

'Am I right?'

'Yes, probably you are; but old Thirdly is a jolly fellow, and very good company.'

'That depends.'

'Depends upon what?'

'Upon the views you take of the functions of a parish priest.'

'Well, we won't debate the point any further. I'll go and

have a wash before dinner.'

'Wait a moment. I have a little news that will interest you, I know.'

'What's that?'

'I have had a long, long chat with that young lady artist of whom you have spoken so often.'

'You have!' he exclaimed, with every faculty on the alert.

'Yes; she was passing hurriedly a short time after the storm commenced this morning. I could see that before she could reach her rooms in town she would be drenched to the skin, so I rushed into the hall, and, as she was passing the gate, I called to her. She came hesitatingly and rather shyly, but we were soon friends. We soon found that we had much in common. I believe that, like ourselves, she has some secret trouble. She did not tell me any of her history, but she wears, as you told me, a very sorrowful look. I don't think that this

is natural to her, for at times this afternoon she was quite merry and playful, and then the cloud would suddenly settle again. She is a true genius; her pictures are lifelike and full of suggestive thoughts.'

'How was it she was out in the storm?' asked Dick lamely,

as if in want of something to say.

'She said she had started immediately after breakfast, when the weather was so bright and fine. She went up Cusop Hill to a point where she could get a full view of the Black Mountains, and became so absorbed in her work that she did not notice the black clouds until the rain began to fall.'

'I wish—I wish I'd—been—at home. But it could not have mattered, the poor penniless wretch that I am,' he said, more to himself than to his sister; then turned and went out into the dismal hall and up the wide oak stairs to his bed-

room.

After Dick's departure Mr. Moorhouse put on his waterproof and cap and went at once to see Mr. Parchment. He went carelessly into the office, which was situated in a back street, not far from the main thoroughfare. At the door he met an office-boy with a dirty ink-bottle in each hand and a broad blue-black streak across his forehead.

'Is Mr. Parchment in, my boy?' he asked.

- 'No, sir,' answered the boy politely; 'but he said as how he would be back at six o'clock.'
 - 'Well, it's only five now. Is there no one in?'

'Yes, sir, Mr. Quill is at his desk.'

'I suppose Mr. Quill does business in the absence of your master?'

'Yes, sure.'

'Mr. Quill will be able to give me some particulars about the Moor House estate?'

'Yes indeed, sir. Walk this way, sir.'

The boy led the way into the office, which was of the usual stereotyped order, with a small counter just inside the door and a flap at one end, which lifted up to make a passage for those who were privileged to enter the inner circle. There were desk fixtures along two sides of the room, on which lay a few ledgers and some musty deeds. On the side opposite the door were a large cupboard, a couple of safes, and a door evidently leading into a private sanctum. Mr. Quill came forward with a quiet, 'How do you do, sir?' I am at your service.'

e, according to a placard that is posted in different f the town, that your master has an estate to sell, and I make inquiries about the same. I suppose it is still market?

, sir. It's been in the market since Monday, but there been a satisfactory bid for it.'

s youth is delightfully unsophisticated,' thought Mr. ouse; but he simply asked: 'Have you the plans of the id house?'

Quill went to one of the desks and took out an Ordnance n which the boundaries were marked in red ink. He this upon the counter, and placed beside it a parchment hich the last conveyance was written. Mr. Moorhouse to be allowed to look carefully over both. Permission dily granted, and the clerk turned to his desk and went his work.

Moorhouse had just concluded his examination, and, got all the information he required, was about to hand the documents, when some one was heard coming up the The clerk looked up and said:

elieve this is Mr. Parchment, sir.'

had scarcely finished the sentence when the door and that worthy entered. His face appeared flushed, might have been due to the exertion of climbing the but there was certainly a strong suspicion of whisky, suspicion was confirmed when he entered the office and eath began to vitiate the atmosphere. He looked at corhouse and the parchments on the counter, and a scowling face towards Mr. Quill, as much as to say, you been giving the show away? But in a most manner he turned to Mr. Moorhouse, who had been on the counter all the time, as if deeply engrossed in agraphical position of Moor House.

w do you do, sir! Beastly weather this, isn't it?'

i, it has been very stormy and wet this afternoon,' Mr. Moorhouse, with a strong Yorkshire accent, which ld well imitate.

1 don't belong to these parts, sir?' questioned Mr. 1ent, rubbing his hands.

answered the other laconically.

Parchment lifted the flap in the counter, and, gathering papers, led the way across the room into the small box ed his private office.

..... nad an opportuni

estate,' he thought, 'but it's now or neve.

It did not matter much. He had hear and he had noted the situation carefully a in the car. He had had plenty of time to deeds; then there was the presentiment the future home. If he delayed, Mr. Parchm get wind that he was a wealthy man, and i was anxious to purchase, he might stick to delaying matters considerably. He wante altered and brought up to date by moder time for his wife and himself to have the be months. There was also a thought which did not like the idea of being robbed by this thousand pounds.

'Will you have a drink?' asked Mr. Parciout his keys and opened a small cupboardecanters and glasses. 'What will you take

'I won't take anything, thank you.'

'Yes, do take a glass of something. It make a good bargain—quickens his tongue,

'I've not come here to talk, Mr. Parch here to do business or not. I'm not very parthings go, but I'm not going to waste time somewhat irritably, for by this time he fu opinion of the man's character.

'As you will, sir—as you will,' he and out a glass of which

'Forty to forty-five thousand pounds! Fiddlesticks! Twenty to twenty-five thousand pounds is much nearer.'

Mr. Parchment lifted up both hands, and, putting on a most

injured air, he said:

'Never! never! It is dirt cheap at the price I have fixed.'

There was a good deal more talk in a similar strain, until at last Mr. Moorhouse impatiently rose to leave, and, as he did

so, he added:

'Mr. Parchment, I've wasted too much time over this already. I've been to Malvern, and am convinced that the neighbourhood would suit me in every way. I don't want to turn farmer, which I shall have to do if I buy this estate. have no money to throw away. I could build a place with all modern improvements, plenty large enough for my wife and myself, on quarter the money this will cost. With regard to your insinuations about "old country seat and social position," I tell you plainly I'm not going to pose as the head of an old Herefordshire county family. I only want a quiet home, where my wife and I can end our days in peace. I know the value of property perhaps as well as you do. If this estate were on the suburbs of a thriving city, and I wanted it for commercial purposes, I would give you the price you ask without any further ado; but in this case it is different. Property here has little or no commercial value, nor is it likely to have. willing to split the difference with you, and give you the market value—the full market value, mark you — which is thirty thousand pounds, and not a penny more. This is my last word. I want your answer-yes or no.'

Mr. Parchment was going to say something about loss and

ruin, but Mr. Moorhouse stopped him, saying:

'Yes or no. I must be going. If I buy, you can have your money as soon as the conveyance is ready. That's my method of doing business.'

He looked Mr. Parchment straight in the face. This made the agent very fidgety. His beady, shifty eyes blinked for a

moment or two, and then he answered:

'You can have it at that. You can have it at that, but it

means a great sacrifice on my part.'

'I can quite believe that you are often making great sacrifices,' replied Mr. Moorhouse, with withering sarcasm. 'I want everything settled mid-day, by to-morrow. Do you want a deposit?'

.....cu to his notel, al

her to come down on the following Monda well enough to do so, but to take the greaplenty of wraps.

Next morning he saw a solicitor, and h forward. While the conveyance was being a stroll round the quaint old town. The and other places of interest, were visited; the office, where the transaction of the precompleted, signed, and sealed.

When Dick Llewellyn arrived at the luncheon-time, he found Mr Moorhouse smo with a satisfied look upon his face. Dick loc

said in tones of surprise:

'Surely you have not completed the bargain

'I am glad to see that you have such observation, Dick. You are quite right in you

'Well indeed! and with old Parchment, to sat down.

Mr. Moorhouse then told his experience Dick's question. As he finished he said:

'Dick, my boy, I never forget a kindness. me a considerable sum in this transaction. Wyou in return?'

'You have done more for me already than I don't feel the same man that I did vesterdareward, please,' he said as

The car was ready in a few minutes, and they were soon gliding down the street. They had not gone many yards when they saw Mr. Parchment coming up briskly towards them.

they saw Mr. Parchment coming up briskly towards them. Mr. Moorhouse nodded; Mr. Parchment blandly smiled, and then his facial expression suddenly changed when he saw who was in the car, and a vindictive glare supplanted the smile.

This look did not escape either of the two men. The elder

said:

'Friend Parchment looks daggers at you, Dick. You will be glad when you get out of that old Shylock's clutches.'

'I shall indeed,' he answered emphatically.

Mr. Parchment thought he now saw the meaning of the thirty thousand pounds being offered to him as 'the full market value.' Why had he been so precipitate in selling? He wanted the money, it was true, but if he had been more cautious he might have got his full price. No doubt this man was rolling in wealth. That car had not cost less than a thousand pounds, probably more. Yes, that cursed young squire in embryo had practically robbed him of ten thousand pounds, for there was no doubt that Moorhouse was most anxious for the property. He remembered Dick on the stair as he was having a parting word with his friend. Yes, he must have heard, and he must have told, or why did Moorhouse stick out so persistently for the thirty thousand pounds?

stick out so persistently for the thirty thousand pounds?
'Curse them both!' he muttered. 'But I'll be even with

them yet!'

CHAPTER VI

MOOR HOUSE AND ITS NEIGHBOUR!

MR. MOORHOUSE and Dick reached the lodge moments, and the chauffeur knocked at the d nearly hidden with ivy and trellis-work. An old out, and as the car was turned gently into the dinized Dick, and exclaimed:

'Lauk-a-day, Master Richard! be that you?'

'Yes, Susan, the identical Richard.'

'And how be your sister and the folks at home

'Fairly well, thank you, upon the whole.'

The old woman refrained from mentioning the squire, so she spoke of him as 'folks at home.'

Dick turned to Mr. Moorhouse, and said n

fully:

'This is one of our old servants. As you kee had to be reduced, and Susan was one who had though we were very sorry to part with her as husband.' Turning to Susan, he said: 'This is house, your new master, Susan. I am sure he kind to you both.'

'I can never hope to find one so bind

comfort without spoiling the architectural effect of the whole. He walked round outside, saw the neglected wilderness called a garden, the pond, coach-house, stables, and all that was to be seen. He felt sad with the thought of what the place had obviously been and what it was now.

'Sufficient for to-day,' he said to himself, as he walked round to the front of the house, where he had left the car, and after a few words with the old man, they drove to the upper lodge, which at present was occupied by a man who had rented it from the agent, no gardener having been kept for some

'Is there a point where we can get a bird's-eye view of the whole estate, Dick?' asked Mr. Moorhouse.

'There is,' answered Dick. 'Drive along the road to the

right.'

As they drove along Mr. Moorhouse looked down at the house, almost hidden behind the huge oaks and elms. Dick heard him say half aloud:

' Just the place—splendid! This will suit us both admirably and—and-

His voice dropped, and he fixed his gaze in front, though it was quite evident that he saw nothing, being lost in thought. Dick roused him from his reverie by saying sharply to the chauffeur, 'To the left, please,' as they came to a bend in the road. They went a short distance up this road, past a fine old house on the right, and, coming to a stile almost hidden by bramble bushes, they left the car, and strode quickly up a footpath towards a wood, and were soon hidden among the trees. When they emerged from the trees at the summit of the hill, Mr. Moorhouse took out his binoculars and surveyed the scene before them, turning first in one direction and then in another.

'Moor House is down there,' said Dick, pointing in the

direction.

'Ay, ay,' he answered; 'I had not noticed it in particular. This is grand, glorious—one of the finest panoramas I have ever seen! I tell you, my lad, I've travelled over most of this civilized world of ours and seen much, but nothing to surpass this. The trees are only just beginning to show green. What must it be in summer and when the autumnal tints have been painted by the fingers of decay? And this vast expanse is the Wye Valley?

The sun and the wind had dried the top of the hill, so they sat down upon what appeared to be the ruins of a wall.

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There seems to have been a building here in some remote

riod of the past, Dick?'

Yes, this is the site of an ancient castle or signalling tion, and dates back to the time of the Romans. The campment was in the valley yonder. It is now called Boate Farm. From here, as you can see, they were in full view the camp, and, being able to take such an extensive survey the surrounding country, they were able to warn the army of approaching enemy. I will show you the deep entrenchnts which were thrown up. They can still be distinctly ced behind those trees there. The ancient name of this inence was Llyad, and it is known at the present time by name of Mouse Castle. This historic ground is included the wonderful bargain you have just completed. I suppose ery foot of the ground in this neighbourhood was stained h blood during the Border Wars. No doubt the warriors t occupied this place fought valiantly with my worthy forehers in the good old times.'

I suppose that is your parish church in the graveyard

nder?' said Mr. Moorhouse.

Yes; that is the scene of Mr. Thirdly's ministrations.'

Is it a very old church?'

Yes; it was built by the monks of Llanthony—or, rather,

'Never mind, my lad. Its glory has not yet wholly departed, and you will some day be able to build up the ruins and hand down to your posterity your dear old home in all its ancient glory, and even greater than ever before, because the home of

a greater, even Christ.'

'So may it be,' said Dick solemnly. 'But,' he went on, 'I think we must be going, or Ruth will think we are going to disappoint her. It is now four o'clock. I'm afraid you'll find it rough for the car by the nearest way. If you like, we can walk by the near cut across the fields, which will bring us there in ten minutes, and the man can take the car back to town.'

Dick pointed out the way, and Mr. Moorhouse agreed to his

suggestion.

Ruth had been looking out for them, and saw them coming

along the path through the churchyard.

When Mr. Moorhouse entered the hall of the manor-house, he was struck with its old-time appearance, its heavy oak panels, the ancient armoury, and the valuable grandfather's clock; but he had only an opportunity for a cursory glance, for a tall young lady came forward timidly, and he was brought back from the past to the present by hearing Dick's voice speaking his name and introducing his sister.

'Please excuse my inattention, Miss Llewellyn; but I am

profoundly impressed with this magnificent old hall.'

'Yes, it is fine, isn't it?' she answered, as she glanced round with a sad yet proud expression on her marble-like countenance.

Mr. Moorhouse noticed that she had clear-cut features similar to her brother's, but hers were more delicate, paler, and more refined. Had it not been for the light and animation in those lustrous black eyes, she might have been mistaken for a classic statue of feminine beauty. Tall, dark, with strong yet not masculine features, her clear complexion was enhanced, perhaps, by the mass of wavy hair, black as the plumes of the raven. There was the same sad expression on her countenance as that of her brother. She held the hand of Mr. Moorhouse for a moment in both hers, and, looking earnestly in his face, said passionately:

'Thank you so much, Mr. Moorhouse, for what you have done for my brother! I believe through you that my prayers

will be answered.'

Mr. Moorhouse found himself as much drawn towards this young lady as he had been to her brother. Her impulsive con-

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ence only emphasized the strange affinity that bound them ether, an affinity which was far beyond his ken; but he olved that he would do his duty and follow what he lieved to be God's leading. He could see that these young ople had few friends; he was convinced that few people had it confidence. Why should they trust him, a perfect anger? Why should they lean upon him, look up to him? was convinced that they had not been thrown together by blind fate or mere chance, but that it was part of a Divine in; and he, who never before in his life had professed to the more than an ordinary interest in religious matters, eathed a heartfelt prayer to God for Divine help and idance.

As Ruth handed him a cup of tea, she asked:

When is Mrs. Moorhouse going to honour us with a

I wrote to her last night, telling her about the house and ghbourhood, and asking her, if her strength would allow, to me down on Monday, as I wanted her opinion on the decoran of the rooms. You see, I always give woman her place. I nk she ought to be queen of her own home, mind her own siness, and let other people's alone,' he answered, with a try twinkle in his eyes.

'If Dick be "Dick," why can't I be "Ruth"?'

'Well, Ruth, we shall be very pleased indeed to come and spend the evening with you on Monday. There! will that do for you?' he said pleasantly, as he took her slender hand in his to say good-bye.

'Excellently!' she exclaimed impetuously, and the look of

sadness was dispelled for a time from her beautiful face.

'You will come up to church to-morrow morning?' she

called as they went away.

'Yes, I'll be there,' he shouted back cheerfully; and then Dick and he were lost to view.

CHAPTER VII

MRS. MOORHOUSE MAKES NEW ACQUAINTANCES

MOORHOUSE had a busy day on the Monday following the nts recorded in the last chapter. His time was fully upied in interviewing local tradesmen and arranging for ious estimates. He had not seen Dick all day, but as he standing on the platform of the railway-station waiting for 4.30 train, up came that worthy with a cheery 'How do i do!' and towards five o'clock the train came steaming nd a bend about half a mile down the line.

Here she comes !' cried Dick excitedly.

One of the main excitements of the town was the arrival of

When they arrived Ruth was in the hall waiting for them. There was a warm greeting, after which Ruth said:

'Will you come upstairs and take off your things, Mrs. Moorhouse? I am sure it will be a relief to do so after your

long journey.'

'No, thank you, dear,' she replied; 'I've had them off nearly all the way. If you will not think that I am playing truant, I should like to see Moor House before dinner. I think I shall sleep better if I see it.'

'Certainly,' said Ruth; 'do just as you please. Will you

come into the drawing-room?'

The gentlemen, who were left discussing some piece of ancient armoury hanging on the wall, heard Ruth saying:

'Allow me to introduce you to a new acquaintance of mine

-Miss Marian Turner.'

Dick turned and led the way into the room immediately, and as he was being introduced Mr. Moorhouse noticed that both gave a little start and a look of recognition, though they simply exchanged an ordinary greeting.

'Miss Turner is an artist,' Ruth went on, 'who has been

'Miss Turner is an artist,' Ruth went on, 'who has been in the neighbourhood for some time, painting its beauties.'

'I hope Miss Turner will stay to dinner,' said Dick.

'No, thank you,' replied the artist; 'I feel almost like an

intruder. Besides, I have no dress fit for dinner.'

'We'll take you as you are. dear,' said Ruth affectionately, putting her arm round her. 'I'm sure our friends will excuse your dress. It is not a very formal meal, you know.'

'Of course she'll stay,' said Mr. Moorhouse, with beaming face. He turned the conversation tactfully by saying, as Ruth got up and went to attend to Mrs. Moorhouse: 'I am very fond of pictures, Miss Turner, and I hope that the mantle of your great namesake has fallen upon you.'

'I cannot lay claim to any remarkable genius,' she answered quietly. 'I only do my best. I love Nature, I love Art. I used to paint simply for pleasure, but now I do so for a liveli-

hood.'

'Pardon my inquisitiveness, but do those canvases standing against the hall-table contain some of your work?'

'Yes; there are two, but they are not quite finished.'

She was rising to fetch them, but Dick anticipated her action.

'Put them against that flower-stand, Dick. Please turn them a little that way. There, that's the ticket.'

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And Mr. Moorhouse looked at them first with critical, then h admiring eyes.

This is one of the scenes in this neighbourhood, Miss

rner?'

Yes; it is a niche up the dingle. I want to finish it before leaves are fully out. It is a winter scene, you see. The ler I call "Desolation." It is an amphitheatre up on the lck Mountains. This is the plateau from which the mounts rise almost precipitously to their summits.

You said just now you were painting for a livelihood,' said

. Moorhouse. 'Are any of your pictures ordered?'

Well, now, you are already aware that we are coming to a in this district. My wife and I are very fond of pictures. cal scenes would be by far the best with which to adorn our oms. Will you allow me to order all you can do for the next months, including these two, of course, and allow me to pay each picture as it is finished?

Miss Turner could not reply. The thought of her last five unds, and how she had prayed to be able to sell the fruits of labours, so that she might obtain the bare necessaries of overwhelmed her. Now the answer had come in a most narkable way. Her bosom began to heave and her eyes to

'May I call you "Marian" and "Ruth," my two beautiful nieces?'

'Uncle!' they both cried impulsively.

They chatted merrily during dinner that evening, with constant sallies of wit and humour. They talked of the pleasures of driving, riding, painting, writing, and of what Moor House was to be in the future. Mrs. Moorhouse caught the infection of youth, and her husband thought he had never seen her looking happier in all his life. After dinner the ladies went into the drawing-room, the gentlemen remaining behind to have a smoke. There were two lamps burning on the long dining-table, which cast ghostly shadows into different corners of the dull old oak-panelled dining-hall.

'Have you never sat here on a Christmas Eve and seen all kinds of hobgoblins?' said Uncle, with a slight shudder.

The dimly-lighted room, with its antique furniture, ancient oil-paintings, and other relics of the past, was enough to affect

the most unimaginative.

'By Jove!' exclaimed Dick. 'I have had enough to do with realities to think much about ghostly visitants; but I'm surprised this place is not haunted, if any place be. There has been enough wickedness here to bring upon it the curse of a righteous God, the fires of Sodom and Gomorrah.'

'These places are supposed to be full of secret nooks and passages, relics of the good old times when people had often

to flee for their lives and hide to save their skins.

'Well, Uncle, I'll tell you a secret known only to Ruth and myself so far as we are aware, for nothing has been done to this room in the way of alterations for a century at least. I don't see why we should keep the matter secret either, for it will probably never be needed again; but one never knows what may happen.'

He little knew how soon it would be needed.

Mr. Moorhouse became interested, for he dearly loved a little romance.

Dick went on:

'One night, about two months ago—I think it was the night before Christmas Eve—Ruth and I were sitting here discussing a little romantic nonsense that I was about to send up to the sympathetic editor of the *Fleet Street Magazine*, when conversation drifted as ours has done to-night. Our imaginations ran riot, and we soon honeycombed the whole foundations of this castle with secret passages, caves containing chests of gold,

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such-like. We became inspired with the desire for loration, and we decided to see if we could find anything. knew that we were quite alone. The servants had all red, and my brother was away. This was the last time he nt away, and he was subsequently brought home by one of pals in a helpless condition. As I was saying, Ruth I began to search, each having obtained a candle from the -table. We had read of secret doors in such rooms as , but never expected to find one in ours. My sister commenced at this end, I at the other, examineach panel closely. She was at the end nearest the ruinsoldest part of the house, dating back to the thirteenth There had been a death-like stillness for a time, ch was broken at last by Ruth calling in a hoarse whisper: ick! Dick!" When I looked up, quite startled, I saw n where I stood that her face was pale as death. I was ckly at her side. "This looks suspicious," she said, as she the candle near the edge of the panel, the air coming bugh it causing the candle to flicker. "It looks exactly like others," she went on, "but I felt the cold air coming ough; yet it does not seem loose at any point. Perhaps the gets in through the window-sashes, which are badly in need

I nuched at the name! but it was

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large farmyard lanterns. We lit this, and I went first, while she followed close behind. When we had got a little way along the narrow passage, my sister whispered to ask me if we had not better step back and examine the workings of the latch arrangement. We did so, and found that there was a little flat disc which seemed part of the carving, about the size of a half-crown, which, if pushed with the finger on the outside, lifted a latch on the inside, and the panel flew noiselessly open. From the inside it could be opened easily enough, being almost like

an ordinary kitchen door.

'When we had completed our investigations, we began once more to descend. The passage was so narrow that we could scarcely get along, and we were soon covered with dust and cobwebs. We descended one flight of steps, then on through a passage, at the end of which there was another flight of stairs. At the bottom we found a large room with a few pieces of furniture in it, some three-legged stools, a couple of small tables of similar make, and a few jugs and earthenware jars. My sister was anxious to return, saying she had had enough for one night. So we came back by the way we went, not looking for any other exit. We decided to keep the matter secret, for what reason I do not know, unless it was because of the probable origin and use of the dungeon.'

'Thank you, Dick. Some time I should like to see it, but we must now join the ladies, or I am afraid they will not think

us very sociable.'

'I am glad my brother has been quieter to-day, or I might have dreaded a disturbance,' said Dick as they went to the drawing-room.

'I do wish that something could be done for him, Dick, but

I fear that he has gone too far.'

They spent about an hour together, and then Auntie suggested that they should retire to their respective nests for the night. Marian rode back to town in the car. Dick would have liked to join them, but could find no excuse.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MARTYR'S GRAVE

MR. AND MRS. MOORHOUSE arrived at the Swan Hotel about ten o'clock. Though the day had been fine and bright, the night was cold, and Mrs. Moorhouse was pleased to see a cheerful fire burning in their bedroom. The room was barely furnished, and rather low in the ceiling, but clean and bright. After she had taken off her things and unpacked a few necessary articles from one of her portmanteaux, she lay down upon a couch before the fire.

'What do you think of Miss Turner?' asked Mr. Moorhouse presently.

'Why do you emphasize the surname so strongly?'

'Because I don't believe that it is her surname.'

'Oh!'

'It's a fact. I don't. I cannot. I know you want my reason. It is this: several times during the afternoon when the name "Turner" was uttered, she gave a sudden start, as if she had not quite got accustomed to her nom de guerre.'

'You do not think that she has done something wrong and is hiding from justice?' said Mrs. Moorhouse, with a startled

expression.

'No, I don't. But if you must know what I do think, little quizzer,' he replied with a look of affection, 'I believe she has been wronged—cruelly wronged—and that she is fleeing from injustice.'

'Dear old John, I am so glad to hear you say this.'

'Glad that the girl has been wronged, eh?'

'No, certainly not—you know better—but glad that you believe her innocent, for I have a plan in my mind that I want to mention to you. I hope you won't object to it. I'm sure you won't.'

'It won't matter if I do. It's all the same.'

'No, I don't push matters in that way-you know I don't.'

'I do know, sweet one. Now, what is your plan?'

'I share your thought that this girl is an exile, and unjustly so. I am coming into a land of strangers, and may need a little company. I was going to ask Miss Turner to make her home with us instead of being in rooms. We can let her have a studio and all that she requires, so that she can continue her work if she wishes, but shall be treated as our own daughter.'

'Capital! capital! my little woman. I'm quite agreeable. Now, I also have a little plan as well as you, and I want your consent before I begin to carry it out. I am convinced that the Llewellyns are in very low water. You have had a few hints of the young squire's habits. I told you that they were in the clutches of old Parchment. They have not complained, but rather done their best to hide their poverty. Dick gave me a piece of information which prevented me from being robbed by that old skinflint of ten thousand pounds. I would like to present Dick with the Lord's tenth, one thousand pounds. What do you say?'

'Certainly, by all means, at your earliest opportunity.'

'You know that we are to join them again on Wednesday evening at dinner. How if we both carry out our plans then?'

'Agreed!' she exclaimed, with evident delight.

After prayers they retired to rest.

Next morning they had an early breakfast, and drove to Moor House, where they had appointments with a contractor and a master painter. They spent some time about the house, and when Mr. Moorhouse had seen to the things that he considered within his province, he left his wife to see about the decorations, that she might have them to suit her own taste. He asked the contractor to accompany him to another part of the estate, and on the way they discussed the architecture of the new wing, the conservatories, the dynamo shed, and other matters.

When they arrived at the spot Mr. Moorhouse had pre-

viously fixed upon, he said:

'I have chosen this site, Parry, for some workmen's cottages. I don't want these to interfere with the alterations at the house. Those must be done first, but I want a tender for these which, if satisfactory, will enable you to keep the men going, and thus complete the whole to your own benefit and mine.'

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miserable hovels for their servants, there is no ould follow their example.'

As you will, sir; but these will cost three times ne average workman's cottage.'

Ves I have no doubt they will

Yes, I have no doubt they will, and give ten t ifort and health to enable the dwellers to do k.'

I will do as you wish, sir, and get the plans, spe tenders according to order. My men, you w ady at work on the drains.'

I want you to push on with this work, Parry. e finished I may be able to find you some more. little schemes in my mind?

little schemes in my mind.'
All right, sir. I have advertised for extra men,

get the work done according to promise; but you push on.'

Ah, Parry, you have to push on if you wish to ke our times. I shall expect to have the tender for rations by to-morrow morning and that part of upleted within a month.'

'arry stood aghast as he said:

It is almost impossible, sir, but I will do my be men on.'

Do your best, Parry—do your best; I ask no morning.'

Mr. and Mrs. Moorhouse spent that day and the r house and park, except for a short annual 'Here.'

She placed an envelope between the silver.

' Marian's?'

Another envelope was placed on the table in the same way as the first. Then she said with a merry twinkle in her eyes and a roguish expression upon her face:

'Will you have the soup served before we file in?'

'All right,' said Ruth, who thoroughly enjoyed a good joke,

though she little knew what was coming.

Mrs. Moorhouse returned to the drawing-room, and Ruth went to tell the parlour-maid not to sound the gong, as she would wait and fetch the others when all was ready. Shortly afterwards she went to the door of the drawing-room and said:

'Come, come, you people, haven't you heard the gong?

Soup has already been served.

Miss Turner thought this very strange, but it might possibly be an old Welsh custom. They filed out at once. When they had finished the first course and the plates were removed, Dick was astonished to see a letter addressed to 'Richard Llewellyn, Esq., Cusop Manor.' Glancing up, he saw Marian looking at a similar packet. They both looked very confused, and though the others tried to put them at ease, conversation went on in fits and starts, and finally almost ceased.

When the servants had retired, after dessert had been served, Dick's patience was exhausted. He tore open his envelope and found a note, folded carefully. Within it was a cheque for

one thousand pounds, and Dick read with dim eyes:

'MY DEAR SIR.

'I wish to acknowledge the importance of the valuable information you gave me prior to the negotiations for Moor House Estate. This, no doubt, saved me ten thousand pounds. I feel that I cannot do less than offer you one-tenth as your part of the bargain. I feel this is not half enough. If you feel the same please inform

'Yours faithfully,

'JOHN MOORHOUSE.'

'RICHARD LLEWELLYN, Esq.'

Dick blew his nose very vigorously, but this trick of the embarrassed failed him this time, so he suddenly begged to be excused, and left the room.

Miss Turner did not know what to make of this, and looked more confused than ever. As the rest had their whole attention concentrated upon the fruit on their plates, and her curiosity being intensified by Dick's strange behaviour, she tore open the envelope, and in it was a little note:

'MY DEAR MARIAN.

'I have been thinking that you must be very lonely having none of your friends near you. I am coming here a stranger into a strange land, leaving my friends and acquaintances in the North. Do you think that you could make Moor House your home when we settle there? I should be very pleased indeed if you would. I don't ask you to come as a companion, but as a daughter.'

Marian could read no further; the tears were coming too fast. She went and put her arms round the neck of Mrs. Moorhouse, and sobbed as though her heart would break.

Ruth was quiet for a little while, and then asked them gently if they would like to go into the drawing-room. She had guessed the contents of the note, and after accompanying the two into a cosy corner, she went into a little room that Dick called his den, and found him with his elbows on his knees and his face hidden in his hands. Hearing footsteps he looked up.

'Oh. Dick, what is the matter?' questioned Ruth in a quiet,

subdued tone.

'They are too good,' he answered brokenly; 'read that, and

Ruth began to sob quietly, but after some moments pulled herself together and said: 'Did I not tell you, Dick, that God does answer prayer, and

that He would make a way for us out of our difficulties? believe Mr. and Mrs. Moorhouse have been sent here by God to help and cheer us. We shall now be able to pay our servants, and also the quarterly accounts that are owing; yes, and have a nice sum left. But you really must go into the dining-room and thank him for his great kindness.

'I don't know how to do it, Ruth; I cannot do it.' 'But do not let him think that you are ungrateful.'

'Ah, he knows better than that.'

'Perhaps so; but it is your duty, you know.'

They talked for a few minutes, and then Dick said:

'I will go now and thank him, though I scarcely know how to begin.'

As he went in the direction of the dining-room, he saw Mr. Moorhouse standing in the dim light of the hall-lamp. The latter had an idea how matters stood, and he felt that they had rather overdone this practical joke. He had come out into the hall so that Dick would not have to come to him in the full light of the dining-room lamps.

'Hullo, Dick,' he said as carelessly as he could; 'I thought I'd lost you. I should like a walk. Will you come along?'

Mr. Moorhouse offered Dick his cigar-case. They each lighted a cigar and strolled out. They decided to go through the churchyard and along the footpath through the fields. Dick suggested this lonely way that they might talk undisturbed.

'I should like to thank you,' said Dick as they walked slowly along, 'but somehow I cannot find words to express my

thoughts.'

'Dick,' answered Mr. Moorhouse sympathetically, 'don't thank me; I am only an instrument. Thank God. My wife and myself are both convinced that we have been sent here by our heavenly Father—who still takes a deep interest in His children—to help you three orphans.'

'Heavenly Father!' murmured Dick.

Mr. Moorhouse was just going to begin a serious talk with the young man at his side, for he thought the moment opportune, when he heard the creaking sound of the lych-gate through which they had passed a few moments before. Looking back, he caught sight of a female form coming up the path. They were just opposite the old church door, before which grew two large yew trees. He knew not why he did it, but he took hold of Dick's arm and drew him under the shade of the trees. Dick looked surprised and startled as he asked nervously:

'What's the matter, Mr. Moorhouse?'

'Who is that coming up the path?' whispered Mr. Moor-

house, pointing in the direction.

Dick stood as if he were a statue. His lips moved, but Mr. Moorhouse could only catch three words—'Ruth, Martyr's Grave.' These words brought back to his mind a part of Dick's story. They stood a moment or two longer, when Ruth came almost close to them. She would probably never have seen them even if they had been in the open. She

seemed oblivious of everything save the thoughts and burning desires which made her bosom heave and her heart to swell. She knelt on the flat tombstone of the Martyr's Grave with white, upturned face. Just then the pale beams of the crescent moon, which had been hidden by a cloud, shone out and revealed the 'saintly sister' in her true character. It was a sight never to be forgotten. The kneeling form seemed so ethereal; the upturned face was so eloquent of earnestness and spiritual power. It seemed as though for a moment the gates of heaven were opened.

Ruth's lips moved in silence for some moments; then the passion became too strong, and she prayed half aloud, so that they could distinctly hear every word. As her well-modulated voice rose and fell with delightful cadences, the two unwilling listeners stood as if in another world. These are the words that reached their ears so far as Mr. Moorhouse could remember

them:

'O God, my heavenly Father, Thou knowest that I come here to-night with no superstitious thoughts nor idolatrous worship; but I come to be near the body of one who, by Thy grace, has exerted such a powerful influence upon many of my ancestors and upon me. I come because, like those who have gone before me, I find this a way to Thy throne—to Thyself. I come with heart almost too full for words; yet I feel that I must speak, or my heart would break. I come to offer Thee my gratitude for sending us kind friends who truly sympathize with us and are ready to help us, not only in material things, but in spiritual. I offer Thee my deepest thanks for the Christian friend Thou hast given to my brother Dick.' She paused a moment, and then went on: 'O Lord, I have still to pray for my brother's conversion. Wilt Thou open his eyes to the folly of a mere worldly life? Wilt Thou cleanse his heart? Wilt Thou give to him spiritual vision, faith to see Christ as his Saviour? Wilt Thou save him from drink—the hereditary curse of our family? Wilt Thou grant that he may be born from above, and enter into that peace which passeth all understanding, that calm trust and confidence in Thee which is the lot of all Thy true children?'

'Amen,' said Dick hoarsely, as he stepped out of the shadow

and knelt beside his sister.

Mr. Moorhouse felt that this was too holy a scene for mortal eyes, and he hurried quietly away. In as few words as possible he told his wife and Marian what had happened, and they both

agreed that it was best to go home at once. They quickly put on their things, and were soon on their way back to town, by a road opposite to that which led past the churchyard, for fear of disturbing the brother and sister at this critical moment of their lives.

Next morning Mr. and Mrs. Moorhouse started out immediately after breakfast to see the Martyr's Grave, for it had a more than historic interest for them now. They found it beneath the shadow of the ancient yew trees; the epitaph read as follows:

HERE LYETH THE BODY OF

WILLIAM SEWARD,

OF BADSEA IN THE COUNTY OF WORCESTER, GENT., WHO DEPARTED YS LIFE OCTBR. YE 22ND, 1742, AGED 38.

To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.—PHILIP^{NS.} chap. ye 1st, verc. ye 21.

If earth be all
Why o'er and o'er a beaten path
You walk and draw up nothing new.
Not so our martyr'd Seraph did
When from the verge of Wales he fled.

1797

They lingered for some time beside the grave, then walked slowly away as if loath to leave it. As they were coming out of the churchyard they met Dick, who began to apologize for what he feared had spoiled their evening's enjoyment. They stopped him in his apologies, saying that they would rather have a thousand evenings 'spoiled,' if he preferred that term, than that what had happened should have been prevented.

'Oh, I cannot explain the change,' said Dick radiantly; 'the birds seem to sing louder and sweeter, the sun to shine more gloriously, and all Nature seems more beautiful.'

'Life,' answered Mr. Moorhouse.

"Life more abundantly," echoed his wife.

CHAPTER IX

OUR FRIENDS AND THEIR NEIGHBOURS

next few weeks was a very busy time for Mr. rhouse; there was such a lot of detail to attend about three weeks' time the house was read men were now engaged on the outbuildings. Moorhouse left for the North. They did n h of their furniture in their old home. things that had tender associations connected w ents and such-like-to be packed, but left the They went to one of the large furniture chose suites that they thought most in harmor e and its environs. It had been arranged that 1 ve with them, and her tastes had been ascertain ing any suspicions regarding their intentions. was complete, and nothing, so far as they knew, ted. They had bid adieu to their many frien Leeds, and were about to return to their new h the furniture was put into its proper place. t lunch-time Herbert came up with an urger they were both earnestly requested to be at th e o'clock.

'hen they arrived they were surprised to fine

the growth of the firm, and the happy relationships which had always existed between master and man. When he had finished his remarks, he called upon Mr. Bowen to further express the feeling of the men towards their late employer. Mr. Bowen spoke eloquently and to the point, his remarks being punctuated by the cheers and 'hear, hears' of the men. Bringing his remarks to a close, he removed the cloth and revealed to all the valuable presents which had been subscribed for by the men, from the lowest to the highest. A lifelong friend of Mr. Moorhouse was then called upon to make the presentation.

When Mr. Moorhouse rose to reply, the men gave vent to their pent-up feelings, and the cheering was louder than ever. He said what a surprise this gathering was to him: he had not heard a whisper of it before; his friend Mr. Bowen seemed to spring from the earth, and so did his old friend Mr. Ackroyd. He went on to speak of the pleasant years they had spent together. They had passed through years of plenty and years of famine, but they had always stood together. It was a pleasure for him to look back now and to be able to say that in the whole history of the firm they had never had a single strike caused by any dissatisfaction among the men. He earnestly besought them to accept two principles, and work according to them in all their dealings. Those principles were, the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

There were many cries for Mrs. Moorhouse. She rose reluctantly, and in a few well-chosen words tried to thank them for their great appreciation. Her husband and herself, she said, had always felt that they were God's stewards. She wanted the men to remember that all the blessings which they enjoyed were the fruits of Christianity. She knew that it was customary for a good many men to sneer at the Christian faith, and pride themselves on their scepticism or unbelief, but she would say without fear of contradiction that it was Christianity which had taught them as master and man to be just to each other and to love each other.

There was another meeting of a similar character in the Albert Hall, where the public services of Mr. Moorhouse were handsomely recognized.

They rose early on the following morning to prepare for their journey southward. It had been arranged that the chauffeur should take the car, and the rest would go by train.

The news flew like wildfire the following week that Mrs.

Moorhouse would be 'At Home.' The people were on the tiptoe of expectation, full of curiosity and speculation. Some of them were expecting to find everything at Moor House loud and gaudy and its inhabitants boastful and ignorant. They were not a little surprised, when they beheld an air of refinement whichever way their eyes were turned. Mrs. Morgan-Davies, a leader of local society, was distinctly annoyed. She was expecting to get as much matter for scandal and gossip as would last a few weeks at least. Alas! she was bitterly disappointed. There was not a piece of furniture, or jewellery, or plate, or the colour of a wall, or a pad of false hair, that she could adversely expatiate upon when she went to the next teasipping fête. It was very galling, and she visibly chafed under her bitter disappointment.

'Well, little woman,' said Mr. Moorhouse, after the last caller had departed, 'how do you like your new neigh-

bours?'

'Very well, John, upon the whole. As in every other place some are inclined to gossip and say hard things of those who are absent, but, upon the whole, I like them. I believe that we shall have a happy time with them.'

'Has Ruth called?'

'No; you know that her brother has had a stroke of some kind and now lies helpless in bed. I suppose that she is not

able to leave him at present.'

'I want to tell you of a little plan of mine. You know that old Susan has nursed them all, and is deeply interested in them, loving them almost as if they were her own offspring. I have been thinking that it would be a good thing to let Susan and old Thomas occupy the upper lodge, and pay their wages as usual, but set them free to go to the manor-house as they formerly did when they were servants there. We could say that we find younger and better-trained servants are more suitable to us, and that we can spare them easily.'

'Very well, John. I propose that we go and see Ruth at

once before she gets worn out.'

'All right; I'll have the car ready by the time you have got

your hat and cloak on.'

Mrs. Moorhouse found Ruth, as she expected, attending assiduously to the invalid and looking much paler than formerly. Marian, Dick, and Mr. Moorhouse went out upon the terrace with more freedom now than ever they had done before. Ruth was delighted with Mr. Moorhouse's suggestion,

but thought they ought to bear the expense, for they had a

little money in hand.

'Now, my dear,' said Mrs. Moorhouse, 'I am sure John would not like this at all. You see, we have a lot to do down at home at the present time, and this is our way of doing what we ought to do ourselves—by proxy, you see. How is your brother?'

'He is quiet now, dozing a little.'

'Get on your things and come for an hour's drive. The air

and change will do you good.'

They were soon speeding away in the direction of Brecon, going just to the outskirts of the town and back again. Ruth invited them to stay the evening, but they declined, saying that they wished to see old Thomas and Susan as soon as possible, and make arrangements for their removal. They left Marian behind, Dick promising that he would see her safe home, and departed.

Thomas and Susan were delighted with the opportunity of being able to help the young folks at the Manor, and Susan said she would go up at once and clean the rooms ready for the

furniture to be put in.

The following afternoon Mr. and Mrs. Moorhouse were sitting on the lawn in shaded chairs when they saw the ruddy-faced rector, the Rev. Peter Thirdly, coming towards them.

As he drew near he raised his hat and said:

'How do you do, Mrs. Moorhouse? and how are you, Mr. Moorhouse?' In a hearty, jovial manner he went on: 'I have been very pleased to see you at church the last few Sundays. I have longed to speak to you personally, but I felt that I ought to wait patiently until you were settled. I hope I have not tired you with long sermons; never do preach long sermons as a rule; long sermons tire the preacher as well as the listeners.'

'It's not the length of the sermon, Mr. Thirdly,' replied Mrs. Moorhouse, 'but what is said and the power of conviction that accompanies the message that is of importance in my

humble opinion.'

'Well, well; I can't say that I have any particular convictions on those matters,' he said with a broad smile. 'I don't think it's wise to make people sad, and send them away from church with their faces as long as fiddles. There's enough sadness in the world without making any, and I always notice that people who have strong convictions on religious matters

a lawyer and a doctor in the family, and he m He was strongly supported by his two mai whom I had expectations, so I had to submit.' he sins of the fathers,' murmured Mrs. Moorh Vell, I suppose it was a sin, looked at from som

But if I could have gone into the army, as I ve I should have been a success. But my ol they wanted targets in the Church as well as ir. he saints were never so happy as when in war ld find as much fighting there as in India or t seen it, too, but I've kept out of it, as I shoul done if I had been in the army,' he said, laugh this point Marian brought out a cakestand, and followed with a tea-tray.

This is our niece, Miss Turner—the Rev. Peter have heard some wonderful stories of the artis ments of this young lady, and am happy to aintance.

am afraid that many people overrate my ered Marian.

r. Thirdly stayed for about half an hour conver nouse, electric light, Marian's pictures, and othe ur readers will no doubt wonder why Mrs. 1 duced Marian as her niece, but the truth was heard many rumours and speculations rega ery which surrounded her, so to stop the tong ips they had asked Marian's permission to inti

CHAPTER X

MR. BOWEN'S ARRIVAL

THE following week, as Mr. and Mrs. Moorhouse were sitting in the garden, they saw two men coming towards them up the drive. The strangers drew near and came forward with smiling faces. One of the two had evidently been elected spokesman, for he stepped up to the lady and said:

'Mrs. Moorhouse, I presume.'

'Yes.'

- 'Mr. Moorhouse I have seen before, but have not had the privilege of an introduction. I suppose that I must take the liberty of introducing my friend as well as myself. I am colloquially known as "Williams, the draper," I suppose to distinguish me from Williams, the butcher, the baker, or the barber. This is my friend, Evans, the grocer. "The Grocer" distinguishes him from Evans, the sadler, Evans, the fish merchant, and Evans, the publican. We have called as a deputation from the Urban District Council, to convey the thanks of that body for your generous offer to put a weir across the Wye, in order to make this part of the river fit for boating purposes. They think the idea a good one, not only for the young people of the town, but also as an attraction for visitors in the summer time.'
 - 'I suppose I am at liberty to start this contract at once?'

'Oh yes; the Council have made all necessary inquiries and arranged for the work to proceed at your convenience.'

'Excuse me a moment,' he said, as he stepped into the hall

and rang up Parry, the contractor.

They heard him say: 'Hullo! Hullo! Is that Parry? Moorhouse. Can you ride up at once? Be up as soon as possible. Good-bye!'

He went back to the men, who began to talk of the improve-

sed to see you and show you round when we hand.'

e then went on to tell Parry that he thought it to begin making the weir at once, during the s ther. He wanted him, in the first place, to ord tons of cement, get the best of the grave low parts of the reach in the river which the g, get a large strong raft made, put the smal os on the bank near the place selected for the we with the cement, and to put the gravel which into the deeper parts, to make as far as possible h of about four feet. He thought that cement ld be better and cheaper than stone. Parry sa ight so too, and asked if he should get out an e No, Parry, answered Mr. Moorhouse; 'I think d each other by this time. This is a new kin don't know what may happen. A contract v ry. I want a good solid weir made that wil e of the winter floods. Make it and let me know n it is finished. I will look down occasionall between us we may be able to make a thorough you begin at once?'

I can spare a half-dozen men to-morrow morning thing the gravel ready, putting the piles in, and addition until the cement arrives.'

That's right; and get another half-dozen men

and I know not what. How if we get out a subscription-list for some boats for hiring purposes, the profits to go to the reduction of the rates?'

'A very good idea,' answered Parry; 'I'll head one with a sovereign.'

They decided to call a committee meeting for the following evening of those likely to help, and parted by the post-office in high spirits.

The following Sunday morning, as they were leaving church,

Mrs. Moorhouse said to her husband and Marian:

'Shall we call to see how our friends at the Manor are

getting on?'

They called, and found the brother and sister very depressed, for the invalid was much worse in some respects, but his speech had returned and he was no longer delirious. Dick said he had had a talk with him, and his mind was quite clear. He knew that he was sinking, and that nothing could save his life, for his constitution was ruined by fast living. It pained him unspeakably, he said, to leave the estate in such a deplorable condition. He had earnestly asked his forgiveness.

Yes,' said Ruth; 'and I have spoken to him gently about his eternal welfare, but could not get him to speak much about the matter. His thoughts were all of the wrong he had done us. I wish that I could get a clergyman to speak and pray with him. I cannot ask Mr. Thirdly. I don't think that he would want him; and even if he came, I question if he would

do him any good.'

'I have some cheering news for you, my dear,' said Mrs. Moorhouse rather excitedly. 'I had a letter from Mr. Bowen yesterday, to say that he was not feeling very well, and needing a change, and that, if convenient to us, he would now avail himself of the many invitations we had given him to Moor House, and stay with us from Monday until Saturday. I am sure he would just be the one to see your brother.'

'Auntie gets quite enthusiastic when she speaks of Mr. Bowen,' said Mr. Moorhouse laughing, and trying to cheer the sorrowing hearts; 'he's a marvel, and when he arrives she will

have another of her children round her.'

'Could you dine with us to-morrow evening? You both look worn out,' said Mrs. Moorhouse tenderly to Ruth and Dick.

'If we can leave early we will,' they both replied, 'should there be no urgent need for us to remain at home.'

went up to dress. 'He needs a rest, too, for he anguid look in his eyes.' While she was attending et she found herself making comparisons between I. Bowen. One had the advantage in one way, the other. 'What am I thinking of?' she said; 'these the of no interest to me—a fugitive, a wanderer. Vecloud lift? When shall I be really free?'

She heaved a deep sigh, and sat down for a few mosad reverie; then pulling herself together she juint to the basin, washed the tears from her eyes, eded to finish her toilet.

Mrs. Moorhouse was not a match-maker, and ve hated the very name. She went so far as to say tes had been made miserable by it. So what hap ner was a pure accident. Dick and Marian sele, Mr. Bowen and Ruth on the other, with Mr. None end of the table and his wife at the other.

Dick's spirits rose considerably during the meal, as r. Bowen almost entirely taken up with his sister, v was discussing some social questions and work i ms. Between nine and ten Ruth and her brother epared to leave. They would gladly have stayed let duty called them home. Mr. Bowen and Marith Auntie's permission, to accompany them a lit ey were going on foot.

Uncle smiled quietly when he noticed that non

Mrs. Moorhouse said:

'I will send up that water-bed that I was talking to you about. I am sure your brother will find it a great comfort. Mr. Bowen will explain to you how to manage it.'

Ruth thanked her, and said she did not know what she

would have done if she had not had their help.

Mr. Moorhouse stepped outside as he remarked:

'What a lovely night!'

- 'Beautiful,' answered Mr. Bowen; 'and what a deathlike stillness!'
 - 'A great change from the roar of the city traffic, isn't it?'

'Very great.'

'Where are the others?' asked Ruth innocently.

'They've flown,' said Mr. Moorhouse, with a significant

When his wife and he returned to the drawing-room, he remarked with a chuckle and rubbing his hands vigorously together:

'A double wedding—a double wedding! Ah, ah! what do

you think of this, little woman?'

'John! for shame; what are you talking about? Whatever

has put this nonsense into your dear old head?

'Nonsense!' he cried, 'not a bit of it. Don't I know cooing and wooing when I hear it? Haven't I been at the same game myself? Upon my word, it makes me feel young again. Brings back to memory old times and scenes.'

Suiting the action to his words, he kissed his wife with all

the old affection.

When Ruth and Mr. Bowen came in sight of the little grey church, the latter expressed a strong desire to see the Martyr's Grave, especially on a night like this. Ruth said it was not much out of their way. So they turned up the churchyard path. They lingered for some time beside this sacred spot. Mr. Bowen histened as one entranced, as he heard from Ruth's own lips the family history connected with it. She only omitted the last scene. As she stood tall and erect with her opera cloak thrown lightly over her shoulders, and an ermine stole round her neck, which brought out in full relief her large, dark, liquid eyes, her long, dark lashes and wealth of hair, he listened as one in a dream. The story seemed enchanting. The quiet passion of its delivery, the cadence of the voice, and the magnetism of the speaker captivated his mind and heart. When she had finished there was silence for

some time. He did not like to break the spell. But he was suddenly brought back to earth by Ruth asking:

'You will come up to-morrow morning to see my brother,

won't you?'

'I will; and you will join me in prayer for the success of my important mission.'

I will,' she said earnestly.

He gave a start, they looked at each other, then their eyes fell and they walked on in silence towards the Manor, where they found Dick and Marian standing at the gate.

'I hope you are not tired of waiting for us, said Mr. Bowen, in a clear, manly voice, which did not betray in the least the

emotion he was feeling.

'Didn't know you had kept us waiting,' answered Dick.

'Nor I,' replied Marian.

Dick looked rather envious as Mr. Bowen bid them good night and went off with Marian, who gaily waved a good night to both, saying she hoped they would have pleasant dreams.

CHAPTER XI

THE SQUIRE'S DEATH

THE following morning Mr. Bowen jumped out of bed with an effort, for he was beginning to day-dream, which, if indulged in, he knew would hinder the work that he had before him. He had his bath, and, having finished his toilet, he knelt down beside one of the chairs in humble prayer. He asked especially to be divinely guided in the case of the young Squire, and that he might be the honoured instrument in bringing him to the Saviour. When he rose from his knees he went downstairs, and found Mr. Moorhouse in the hall, looking over his letters, while a minute later Mrs. Moorhouse and Marian came down the broad stair together.

'You will take the prayers this morning, Mr. Bowen?' said his hostess. 'This is our little prayer desk. Marian will

play the hymn on the organ.'

The gong sounded, and the servants filed in. Prayers over, they had breakfast; and Mr. Moorhouse then mentioned that he had an appointment with Parry down at the weir. Mr. Bowen answered that he was due at the Manor at ten o'clock, and the two went away to their duties. Mr. Bowen found Dick just inside the gate. After the usual salutation the visitor asked:

'And how is your brother, Dick?'

'Much the same, thank you; quiet, but gradually sinking.'

They walked on, and entered the gloomy house together, going into Dick's den until Ruth came to escort Mr. Bowen to the sick-room. He felt a thrill of delight as he walked upstairs with Ruth by his side; but he suddenly checked himself, knowing that this was not the time to indulge in feelings such as he found taking possession of his heart.

'I don't know how you will get along with my brother

that I may be able to lead that that peace eth all understanding."

I hope you will,' she answered sadly.

When you have introduced me, will you go into you pray that I may be divinely guided?' he said in a sper.

I will,' she answered as she turned the handle of the led the way into the room.

I have brought Mr. Bowen, a friend of the gent spoken to you so much about, Henry.'

he young Squire looked at Mr. Bowen for a mor and then put out his thin hand and said wearily: How do you do?' in a tone which seemed to say, 'er not be disturbed, and I don't want any prying cleriuth sat a few moments by the bedside, but we ced that Mr. Bowen was quietly, yet surely, win her's confidence she left the room. Mr. Bowen invalid as man to man, as brother to brother. He he University, the boating, the cricket, the Dothing he thought would rouse interest. When the moment arrived, he spoke of life, death, and is a few solemn, earnest, kindly words, he rose is, for he could see that the invalid was getting tire the Squire's wan hand in his, and said:

Too much conversation tries your strength. I have to tire you, but to help you. Shall we just have er together before we part, perhaps for ever?'

I don't mind,' said the invalid faintly.

Ir. Bowen knelt down by the bedside, the sick is ling his hand as if for support. He prayed so

'No, Miss Llewellyn; I don't think he is a Christian, if that is what you mean. These sudden revolutions may happen in books; but they don't often happen in real life. Sometimes they do—not often.'

'You do not give me any hope, then?' asked Ruth dis-

consolately.

'Oh, don't misunderstand me! I believe he is thinking seriously about spiritual matters. He has asked me to call again after lunch, and I think it will be then or never.'

'You think the end is near?'

'I do, and I also believe that peace will come, and that

there will be light at eventide.'

'It's so kind of you to come and help us,' she answered gratefully, 'but I am afraid that we are trespassing too much on your well-earned rest.'

'Not at all; a servant of Christ is never off duty. I must

do what I can to help your brother.'

Dick went with Mr. Bowen to lunch at Moor House, and shortly after they all drove up to the Manor in the car. When they arrived, Mr. Bowen went at once to the invalid's room. He received a better welcome than he had dared to expect.

'How do you feel, Mr. Llewellyn?' he asked sympa-

thetically.

'To be candid, Mr. Bowen, I don't feel at all easy in my mind. The fact is I am miserable. I know that I am sinking, never to rise again. I have wronged, cruelly wronged, my brother and sister. I have wasted their substance. I am miserable—I am wicked. The life of Ruth, my pious sister, who is the embodiment of truth, purity, and love, has been a constant rebuke to me, though I would not admit it. I have sometimes hated her goodness because it has shown me the heinousness of my own character. Her words of solemn warning have been unheeded, and sometimes even harshly repudiated. Now I see it all, and I bitterly regret it.'

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,"

murmured Mr. Bowen.

'That may or may not be, but what's the use of repentance to me now? I cannot undo the past. I have robbed my brother and sister, spurned their tenderness, refused their advice, rejected their entreaties, and, what is a far greater crime, I have insulted God, my Maker. I have sinned against Him, often cursed Him. I have closed the door ot

sh, but have everlasting life," repeated Mr. Bowe ed upon this human wreck with pitying eye. the marks of wrong-doing upon that sallow face e clearly seen against the snowy pillow upon w I rested. 'Oh, that men would only be warned i hought. 'Oh, that we could bring fast-living you itness a scene like this! Surely it would cause k—to pray.'

Can it be that God loves me? murmured the dyin His Word says so,' answered Mr. Bowen.

so it does. Now I remember,' said the Squire, self; and, looking appealingly at Mr. Bowen, h I you pray for me?'

r. Bowen knelt down beside the bed and prayed rently, earnestly. Only now and then, when led with a passion for this young man's salvation his voice. He pleaded for his forgiveness, and might enter into heaven's eternal peace. Wher his knees the Squire grasped his hand firmly, an t smile playing upon his face, which a short time drawn with mental agony and despair, he said: believe that God has saved my guilty soul. I ; great is His love, mighty is His power. Of known this before!' Then his face clouded aga 'I might have known it. I have only a waste I am going to meet Him empty-handed.'

am so glad that you have the assurance, the co that all is repented of and all forgiven, Mr. Llew 'raise God!' he answered fervently; 'but I must

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'May I be permitted to make a suggestion?'
'Certainly, by all means,' answered the Squire.

'Dick has told me a little about his affairs. He has grave doubts about the honesty of your agent. Possibly Dick or your sister has spoken to you about Mr. Moorhouse. He is a good man, honest, straightforward, and thoroughly acquainted with business methods. My suggestion is, that you give to him all particulars of your affairs. Tell him exactly how you stand, and appoint him your executor. Mark you, I have not spoken to any of them before on the matter. The thought has only just come into my mind; but I don't think your brother is familiar with the ways of business, and would not readily detect any discrepancy. Mr. Parchment knows this, and will, no doubt, take advantage of it. If there is anything wrong, I believe it would be put right if my suggestion were carried out.'

'I don't know whether you are a thought-reader or not, but you have just expressed my doubts to the letter. I thank you for the suggestion. Could I see Mr. Moorhouse as soon as possible? for I know the end is near, though this thought has given me new strength.'

'Yes; the truth is, he and his wife are downstairs now, anxiously awaiting my return to know if you have surrendered

your soul to God. We have all been praying for you.'

The young Squire's eyes filled with tears at the thought that these Christians loved him, notwithstanding all his sin and wrong-doing. Mr. Bowen read his thoughts, and asked sympathetically:

'Shall I ask Dick and Ruth to see you first, if you are not

too exhausted?'

'If you please,' he answered brokenly.

As Mr. Bowen left the room he could plainly see that what had to be done must be done quickly. When he opened the drawing-room door all eyes were turned towards him with a questioning look.

'It's all right,' he said, with the smile which Mrs. Moor-house knew so well. She had seen it many times before

when some trophy had been won for his Lord.

'Thank God!' they all murmured in chorus. Mr. Bowen turned to the brother and sister, and said:

'Will you go up to him at once? Please don't stay too long, for there is a little important business to do.'

They went sorrowfully out of the room to have what proved

They all agreed to stay until the end, which t st approaching. The invalid began to sink rap ed put his affairs straight as far as he could. at he was in the shadows; but it was also man as at peace with God and those around him. A up from time to time his wasted face. Mr. B quest, sat by the bedside and held his hand. e pillow. About six o'clock he glanced at Ru ured, 'Martyr's Grave,' as if to say her I iswered. He lay as if dead for a few moments g his eyes and fixing them upon the ceiling, l ad as far as he could from the pillow and repea ly, 'Mother! Mother!' His head fell back, entle sigh his spirit fled to God who gave it. Mr. Moorhouse and Mr. Bowen left when they ev could, while Mrs. Moorhouse and Marian str As the gentlemen were passing the lych-ga ountered Mr. Thirdly, who came up in his anner. Mr. Moorhouse introduced Mr. Bow e rector what had happened.

'They never sent to tell me he was worse, or ome and see him to give the last Sacrament, ore bitterly than Mr. Moorhouse had ever hear

efore.

'I hope I have not committed a breach of ronged you in any way, Mr. Thirdly,' said Mr. liss Llewellvn was very anxious that I should se Squire and myself have had many a jolly evening together. We both believed in the good things of this life and enjoyed them. Are you staying over Sunday, Mr. Bowen? If so, I should be very pleased if you would preach for me. I have a spare cassock and surplice.'

'I am sorry to refuse, but I shall have to return on

Saturday.'

'Then you won't be able to take part in the funeral

service?

'Perhaps not,' Mr. Bowen answered shortly, for he did not like to hear this hard, official way of speaking about matters which meant so much to those whom he had but recently known, yet loved. They bade Mr. Thirdly good evening, and walked on.

'Strange man that,' said Mr. Bowen, more to himself than to his friend.

'Yes, he is a strange man, and a man who would no doubt have been successful if he had had the choice of his profession. He has a bright, cheery disposition, and is beloved by many of his parishioners, especially by those who are leading selfish lives, and want to come comfortably to church to discharge what they look upon as a social function, enabling them to maintain their respectability. He has many good qualities, and is a very pleasant companion if you keep away from theological matters. I hear that most of the working people go to chapel, where, they say, they get help and comfort. I am not a bit surprised. I have often thought during my short attendance at St. Mary's that if I did not know the way of salvation, if I were in trouble or doubt, weak and faltering in spiritual matters, there is nothing whatever to help me apart from our beautiful liturgy, and this is often mumbled over and gabbled through in such a way as to make it almost meaningless. If ever our Church be disestablished, many of the clergy will have a large share in bringing it about. I would like to ask a favour, which I know you will grant if you can. I think, if you were to write the vicar of Leeds or some of your friends among the clergy, that you could easily get some of them to take duty for you on Sunday. I have said nothing about it before, but have noticed that you are thoroughly run down. Another week will do you a great deal of good, and if you would stay and preach once on Sunday it would be a great help and comfort to Ruth and Dick. Now, what do you say?

e had not had any help for nearly twelve months.'
On reaching Moor House, Mr. Bowen at once wieeds, and next morning received a telegram to si uty would be taken on the following Sunday.

CHAPTER XII

THE SECRET DUNGEON AND THE HIDDEN TREASURE

AFTER the funeral on the following Saturday the mourners lunched at the Manor, and our friends gathered in the dininghall when the other guests had departed to hear the will read. The family solicitor, a kindly-looking man, brought in his black bag, which he unlocked, and, taking out the parchment, read the last will and testament of the late Squire. Moorhouse was for some time lost in thought; but when the solicitor was reading the codicil, and he heard his name mentioned he happened to look up, and his eyes fell on Mr. Parchment, who had stayed, and who gave him a withering, scornful glance, as much as to say, 'That's the game, is it? But you won't checkmate me; I've made matters all right. than a match for you, with all your philanthropic virtues and business abilities. You've made money, so have I, and more easily than you. With all your cleverness, you do not know the short cuts to fortune that I am acquainted with.

But he little knew the strength and ability of the man whom he despised. Mr. Moorhouse had not been for thirty years in

business without learning the ways of the world.

When the business was over, our little party bade good afternoon to the solicitor and agent and went out on the terrace, and spent the afternoon talking over what had recently happened, and laying plans for future action, till the gong sounded for dinner.

None of them felt much inclined to eat, so they did not spend much time at the table. As they were going out again on the terrace they were met by a vivid flash of lightning and a loud crash of thunder.

'I thought we were going to have a storm. It has been so dreadfully close and stifling to-day,' said Mr. Moorhouse.

'It will do a great deal of good,' said Dick; 'the land is needing rain very badly, and it will get it to-night, and no mistake. This is going to be one of the heaviest storms that we have had for a long time.'

The dingle was from time to time brightly illuminated with the electric flashes, the thunder crashed, echoed, and rever-

berated among the hills and mountains.

'This is a grand sight,' said Mr. Bowen, as he stepped into the room. He had been standing at the open window watching the progress of the storm. 'It is awfully grand to watch the lightning play among the mountains. A storm like this has a wonderful fascination for me.'

'I would rather be without the fascination,' said Marian, with a terrified look as she shaded her eyes with her hand, for there was another vivid flash, followed immediately by another heavy peal, as if it were determined to destroy everything

animate and inanimate that came in its way.

Mr. Moorhouse seeing how matters stood, with his wife and Marian especially, began wondering what he might do to engage their attention. Music was out of the question, for his wife had complained of a headache all day. As he looked thoughtfully round the room his eye caught a certain panel, and he at once thought of the secret dungeon. He began to speak of the first evening he had spent in that room, and how the conversation had drifted to the topic of secret passages and dungeons, and asked Dick if he would tell them the story as he had previously told it to him. Dick told them in a few words what had before been known only to his sister and himself.

They all became interested, especially Mr. Bowen, who always enjoyed something with mystery in it. He voted eagerly for another expedition, and Ruth quietly fetched the candles, so as not to arouse the curiosity of the servants.

Dick, whose face was very pale, stood with his finger upon the round asc in the carving of the panel, and holding the candle so that he could see the rest. He hesitated for a

moment, and then said:

'I hope none of you will ever refer to this secret passage to anyone. I cannot tell you why, but I have a kind of premonition that this will some day be of service to us. Will you come last, Mr. Moorhouse, and close the panel behind you?'

Having said this he turned, pushed gently with his finger,

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and the panel flew open, showing a doorway which would

admit one at a time in a stooping position.

When they had all entered, Mr. Moorhouse stepped in himself and closed the door behind him. They began to make a closer examination than had been previously made. They found some ancient earthenware jars of peculiar designs, which at once absorbed Marian's attention. She forgot the fury of the storm and the foul-smelling dungeon in her eagerness to examine them. They could not decide upon the age of the jars, so they agreed to consult some learned antiquarian upon the matter. There were three straight-backed oak chairs and a small, three-legged table thickly covered with dirt, and a framework of oak, something like a four-poster bed. The place was not as damp as might have been expected, and they soon found out the reason. Mr. Moorhouse called to the rest, saying:

'Here's another passage, and there is certainly pure air coming up. My theory is that it leads to the open air, prob-

ably across the dingle into Wales.'

The rest were soon following at his heels as he led the way; but their progress was soon interrupted by what proved to be a heavy fall of earth, which had dropped at some time and nearly filled the passage, and they had to retreat. When they got back into the cell, Mr. Bowen commenced again to search every nook and corner minutely.

'It is quite clear to me,' he said, 'that this place has been occupied. See, the roof has been discoloured there by the smoke of a lamp, which was probably hung from that staple in the ceiling. Have you any record of this place, Dick?'

'I cannot find anything clear or definite,' he answered; 'but there are some old parchments which are written in mystic hieroglyphics which I could not decipher, and gave it up as an odd freak of some one whose mental equilibrium had been disturbed. The wording of the document is very peculiar, and some of it is very indistinct, as the parchment is brown with age. There is a tradition that there was at one time great wealth hidden about the place, the owner at that time having some connexion with the Court. The house was raided and plundered, but the victors were not very greatly rewarded for their trouble and risk, for what they obtained came far below what they had expected to find. The conclusion they came to was, that the owner was not as wealthy as he was supposed to be, or that the money and jewels were hidden in

Will you hold my candle, Dick, so that I can get with both my hands?

'With pleasure,' Dick replied excitedly. 'Oh, sufficient to pay off the mortgages, what a relief it w

'A parson can always be trusted to find money

f anybody can,' said Mr. Moorhouse.

'Yes; and the laity will take good care that the pleasure of spending it when he does find it,' g Bowen, as if he were tugging at something very her

'Can a layman help "His Reverence" to find t

in this case? Mr. Moorhouse asked eagerly.

It was quite evident that he was as excited as Di

'No, thank you. I've moved it a little; but I to spoil my best suit by kneeling in this dirt.'

'The best suit of most parsons is not of m

answered Mr. Moorhouse.

'Thanks to the generosity and self-denying el

laity,' replied the young cleric breathlessly.

At last he managed to get both his hands under more colour in his face than he had had for ma lifted the box and put it down on the four-potermed it.

'My hands are as dirty as they can be,' said 'so I'll scrape the dirt off, and see what we've Ah! here are some primitive iron hinges—very ru

They all stood round with dilating eyes; it was

into but a serious reality.

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and fell again with a bang. Mr. Bowen put back the lid, and the three men each took out a number of bronze coins. They rubbed the green mould from them with the dirt from the floor, and found that they dated back to the Roman period, the Latin inscription on some of them being very plain.

'I'm afraid these are not of very great value, Dick, my boy,' said Mr. Moorhouse, as he noticed a disappointed look upon the face that a moment before had been glowing with bright

expectancy.

We have not gone deep enough yet,' answered Mr. Bowen. We are not at the bottom. My opinion is that we shall find more valuables the deeper we go. Hold my candle, please. Will you fetch a sheet of strong brown paper, or an old cloth of some kind?' When the cloth was brought he lifted out several handfuls of the bronze coins until he got a small heap of them on the carpet. 'Hullo!' he exclaimed, 'now we are coming to some smaller ones—gold and silver, too. Put these in a separate pile. Ah, what's this? Why, a bracelet!'

"Oh!" exclaimed the ladies in chorus.

'Yes, and beautifully chased, too,' said Mrs. Moorhouse, as she examined it closely.

'Here's a gold chain,' cried Dick, holding it up.

'Here are rings and real diamonds, too; see how they radiate and sparkle,' exclaimed Mr. Bowen; 'and I believe there is a jewel-case in this corner among the coins. So there is. Let us see what we have got here. Oh! I say, look what a charming necklace, and diamond ornaments for the hair.'

Ruth put her thin white hand on her brother's arm as she

said earnestly:

'Dick, our prayers are answered—our debts are paid.'

'Thank God,' he answered fervently, the tears sparkling in his dark eyes. 'But, Ruth,' he added, 'not a single article of jewellery shall be sold. These are yours by right of inheritance. I am sure we shall have plenty to pay our debts without selling them, and even if we haven't I shall not touch them. You shall have them all just as they are taken from the box.'

'No, no!' she protested.

'Yes, yes!' he affirmed. 'I mean it. This legacy is yours as well as mine.'

' Hear, hear,' cried Mrs. Moorhouse, who had been following the dialogue with keen interest.

'I think there will be about as much as will clear off the

who is an expert in these things, and 1 know the his best for us when he knows the circumstances.

'It is kind of you,' said Ruth.

'You are executor, you know, Uncle,' sai glistening eyes. 'Henry never thought of t

appointed you to the post!'

Moorhouse thoughtfully. 'He was most anx some reparation. Perhaps he has done so. It c to me providential from more standpoints than o been found before it would probably have bee wasted. Now it will be used, I believe, in a rig manner.'

'Oh, do come along,' exclaimed Marian; 'thi

full of ghosts.'

'And something more tangible,' answered knowing smile. 'I would like to say before we think it would be wise to keep this affair secret being, at any rate.'

'Certainly,' they all answered.

When they reached the dining-room they f storm had almost abated. It was still raining there was an occasional flicker of lightning, and of thunder.

'I think the storm is over,' said Mrs. Moorho

'Oh, yes,' answered Dick.' 'It's now gone to norshire worthies a visit.'

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'He is a thoroughly competent man,' said Mr. Moorhouse.
'He has done a great deal of work for our firm, and done it well. I think we shall be more than a match for our friend Parchment.'

Mr. Bowen preached on the following morning a most helpful sermon for the bereaved. It was full of comfort, hope

and encouragement.

'We still cling,' he said fervently, 'to the old pagan idea of death; but the message of the Gospel is eternal life. The resurrection of Jesus Christ secures ours. If we belong to Christ we shall certainly rise with Him. If we have His Spirit within us, we must be eternal as He is eternal.'

He pointed out how emphatically Christ and His Apostles had spoken on this subject. The clerk said that as the people were leaving the church they were saying that they had never listened to anything like it before. But there was really nothing new in the sermon. It was spiritual power that made the truth glow with a celestial light, as if it were another Gospel, reaching not only the ears but the hearts of the people.

CHAPTER XIII

MR. PARCHMENT FINDS HIS MATCH

ne following morning Mr. Moorhouse and the accountant at the Manor immediately after breakfast. They comed at once to go over the accounts, which they found very licated. Mr. Moorhouse had not told his assistant anyabout Mr. Parchment, so that he might go into the s with an unbiassed mind; but they had not been at work before he turned to Mr. Moorhouse and asked: s this Parchment strictly honest in his dealings?

following morning, for Mr. Moorhouse was anxious for many reasons to get matters straightened up as soon as possible.

Immediately after dinner Marian and Mr. Bowen went up to the Manor. Mr. Moorhouse had suggested that they should get the treasure-chest out of the dungeon, count the coins, and put the different kinds in separate parcels, and so have them ready for him to take to London on Wednesday. The young people worked with a will, turning the dining-room for the nonce into a counting-house. They carefully noted the number of coins of each kind, so that Mr. Moorhouse should not be put to more trouble than was necessary. By ten o'clock they had all the coins packed into a strong box, with the exception of a few they had kept back for themselves as souvenirs of the wonderful event.

Shortly after lunch on the next day the accountant turned

in his chair and faced Mr. Moorhouse, saying:

'So Parchment wants a thousand pounds from the Llewellyns, does he? I am now certain that these books have been falsified. I am also positive that Parchment is debtor to the Llewellyns for at least five hundred pounds. But still, in a law court it would be a difficult matter to get justice, the falsifications are so cleverly done. This man is no ordinary rogue.'

'We'll get a certain amount of justice, at any rate,' answered Mr. Moorhouse. 'My mind is made up; I am now going to

act. You are certain that what you say is true?'

'Positive.'

Mr. Moorhouse called Dick, and asked him to send for Parchment at once. When the boy had been despatched, and Dick had returned to the office, Mr. Moorhouse said:

'I want you to look at the bright side of things, for your affairs are not so bad as you anticipated. It is true there are the two rather heavy mortgages, but apart from these you are all right.'

'But what about the thousand pounds?'

'We'll soon make that right. Instead of you having to pay that amount you shall have a cheque for five hundred pounds.'

'You don't mean it!' he exclaimed.

'That's exactly what I do mean.'

The accountant looked rather doubtful, but did not interrupt.

'I shall never be able to repay you for all your kindness,' said Dick.

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don't want you to repay me. The reward of helping s is in the deed itself. There is nothing that gives r pleasure. But here comes Parchment. Let me be the sman. I'll try to manage him. That lad of yours must ry smart, for he has not been long in accomplishing his on.'

e has probably met Parchment driving back from one of rms; I saw him pass about an hour ago. I was afraid

by would not find him at the office.'

ood afternoon, Mr. Parchment, said Mr. Moorhouse, as gent came in by the side door. 'Allow me to introduce o a friend of mine—an expert accountant from Leeds. most anxious to make your acquaintance, for he greatly res your genius, and, I believe, shares my opinion that it thy of a better cause.'

deed!' exclaimed the agent scornfully.

es, indeed! We have just been going over the accounts ally, and we have both come to the conclusion that you much smarter man than we should have expected to find sleepy old place like this. You are certainly a great s in figures and accounts. You have an extraordinary hich enables you to look after yourself, and judging from

Mr. Parchment shifted uneasily in his chair, and turned his eyes first to one side of the room and then to the other as he said:

'Yes; that is my claim.'

'Can you substantiate it? Here are the books; do so!'

'It would take a long time. I should have to go back for

years, and also go over the tradesmen's receipts.'

'Well, I don't think there is any need for you to go to so much trouble. We have done it for you. Look me straight in the face, man. Here, look, you deceitful wretch! Of all things in the world I hate deception. I cannot help despising and detesting a man who will take a mean advantage over another. Again I say, look me in the face and tell me that this young man owes you a thousand pounds.'

'Well-well-er-I don't know exactly the amount, but I

think it is approximately a thousand.'

'You think nothing of the kind. You know better, you

lying brute!'

Dick could see that Mr. Moorhouse felt what he said. His feelings were entirely under the sway of his righteous indignation. He had never seen him look so noble as when in contrast with the deceitful wretch cowering before him with conscious guilt. He never thought him capable of so much passion. He had never seen him look so great as when his big honest face was flushed with anger, defending the helpless and the oppressed.

'You know better,' he went on; 'and what is more, you know that you have robbed the Llewellyns right and left, and while the late Squire was incapable, you thought you would make a big haul, as it might possibly be your last

chance.'

'You had better be careful, sir, what you say. You know

that the law can make you prove your words or suffer.'

'The law! The law! A fine scoundrel you are to talk of the law. The law protects the defrauded and the suffering—or, at least, ought to do. Now you speak of the law I will meet you on your own grounds. Are you willing that I should take this matter into court?'

'Well-I-I don't know.'

'I suppose you do know that I am not without money?'

'Possibly not.'

'Well,' said Mr. Moorhouse emphatically, as he brought his fist down heavily on the table, and took his stand before

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Parchment, who was now beginning to quail as he comended how matters stood, 'I tell you plainly, Mr. Parch-, that I will spend every farthing I've got rather than see orphans robbed. Do you hear?'
es, I'm not deaf,' answered the agent doggedly.

Vell, if you're not deaf I will tell you something that make your ears tingle. This young man does not owe you nny.'

ndeed!

and what is more, you owe him at least the amount you

lever!' exclaimed the agent, turning pale as death.

ou don't, do you not? I tell you this is the case. prepared to pay at once, or will you allow the matter to go court? You noticed, perhaps, with those lynx eyes of s, that I locked the door and took possession of the key. you further that I have a man waiting outside, ready at a signal to run down with my car to fetch the policeant, to apprehend you on a charge of embezzlement. ppose your great mind will be able to comprehend the tion now.'

lut a thousand pounds I cannot pay, sir; I'm a ruined answered Parchment brokenly.

'But I haven't my cheque-book,' answered Parchment, as he felt in his inner pocket, 'it's in my bag in the trap.'

'We can oblige you by sending for your bag.

'Thank you,' he replied, for he realized that he was in a

tight corner, and there was no other way out.

Mr. Moorhouse unlocked the door and opened it wide enough for the accountant to pass out, then he shut and locked it again. In a few moments the bag was brought and the door locked again. The agent signed the cheque with a trembling hand. When he had finished, Mr. Moorhouse said:

'Now, we don't intend to persecute you, or to cause you to be persecuted in any way by this matter becoming public. We don't want to compromise either your position or that of your family. Of course, you are no longer agent for the Squire. You cannot blame us for this. You have forfeited our confidence; you have been your own enemy. So far as we are concerned the matter is ended. Good afternoon.'

He opened the door, and the agent crept out like a

whipped cur.

'That's the smartest piece of work I've seen for a long time,' said the accountant. 'I could not see how to settle this matter without a lawsuit, and if we had gone into court the result would have been doubtful, for the fraud was so cleverly done. But you made a bold dash for it, and no mistake.'

'Not at all; I only used the little knowledge of human nature that I possess. I knew that he was guilty, and that if we accused him conscience would be on our side and turn the scales in our favour. Wrong-doing makes cowards of men. You noticed that I roused the man's anger, which threw him entirely off his guard; and he was no doubt thinking how he might revenge himself upon me rather than how to defend himself, and he soon gave himself away. Any man with half an eye could have seen that he was conscious of his guilt. Then I hammered it out of him. He feared disgrace on behalf of his family as well as himself, for they are very important people in this locality. I knew the man did not care a straw for the wrong that he had done, but simply trembled with fear at the thought of being found out. I feel sure that we have not done with him yet. We have let him off easily. He must know that; but he has no sense of gratitude, and is probably at the present moment fuming with a passion for revenge.

'I don't see how he can touch you, at any rate.'

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don't know,' he answered thoughtfully, as his mind went to the secret passage, and Dick's strange premonition. ooked at Dick, who was sitting with his head in his hands in thought, no doubt going over again the scene he had witnessed, and its consequences to his sister and himself. w, Dick,' he went on, 'cheer up! I think we've cleared air a little for you. Now is the time for action, not for ing. I think the money from the chest will nearly, if not be sufficient to pay off both your mortgages. I am off ondon to-morrow morning, and I will do my best for you, feel sure the mortgages will foreclose.'

But there has never been any talk of them doing so.

'robably not. Time will tell; but we must be ready for i. I am glad that things so far have not turned out to be comy as you thought. Your sister's money is all safe, and ad of having a thousand pounds to pay, you have received hundred.'

don't know what we should have done without you. I my sister that I felt when first we met that I believed you d have a powerful influence upon my life, but I never cted that it would have been so great and so far-reaching now fully convinced that God sent you here for a purpose.

what a splendid one it would be, his wicked heart would have swelled with fiendish delight.

And that ex-business man, he would be equal with him, too, with all his cleverness and bombast. He would bring him down a notch or two, that he would. He was, no doubt, popular in the town at present, but this was only on account of his wealth.

He called upon all the powers of darkness to assist him in getting his revenge, and to blight his antagonist. It is a singular fact that men, who do not profess to believe in God or the supernatural, are the ones who do believe in an evil spiritual power. They swear by it, call upon it as their witness,

and to punish their enemies.

'I am sure that the fates will sooner or later favour me,' he soliloquised; 'and when I strike I will hit hard, and no mistake. I'll knock the pious idiots into smithereens. I wish I could do something that would make the whole brood suffer. I'll get the mortgagees to foreclose as soon as possible. Ten thousand pounds is not easily raised, and this may put them into a tight corner. Moorhouse may be able to meet it, of course, but he may not; if not, then I shall have a little revenge, for if I hit one I hit the lot. Curse them, they have robbed and foiled me at every turn lately! I should have been independent of everybody if it had not been for them. Now I don't know which way to turn for money. I must have some from somewhere, either by hook or by crook. I will, too; I've never failed yet. It's certainly a long time since I was in as tight a corner as I am at present. I had made sure of a thousand from the Llewellyns, and now I have had to pay five hundred instead, which will nearly dish me up.'

Here he went into another fit of cursing.

When he got back to the office he was in a towering rage. After terribly abusing his clerk, and boxing the ears of his office-boy until he howled so loudly that people could hear him in the street, he went into his private box, took out his favourite whisky from the cupboard, and drank himself into a stupor.

When the little party at Moor House had spent a pleasan evening together, and were separating once more, Mr. Bowen and Marian offered to accompany Dick and Ruth a short distance on their way home. Mr. Bowen was especially delighted with the idea, for he was returning to Leeds on the morrow. They talked of the marvellous way in which their



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erance had come. Mr. Moorhouse had told them that would probably have enough to pay their mortgages off what they would get for the coins. Dick expressed his ure on this point, for Ruth would have no excuse now to with her jewellery. He told them how he would work the book he was writing, and that his only recreation d be doing his agent's work. He would soon get the into repair. Ruth looked at her brother with admiring and rejoiced in the change which had come over him. an was deeply interested in all his schemes, and questioned first on this point, now on that; and, needless to say, took infinite pains to explain every detail. Mr. Bowen inxious to have Ruth all to himself for a little while, as ould not see her again for some time; but conversation kept up so briskly among them all that there was no ce to separate. When he thought that a favourable oppory had arrived, they suddenly commenced to thank him is help. Had it not been for him they would probably have found the hidden treasure. These young people sublimely happy, and in blissful unconsciousness of the dy and trouble which was ahead of them, wisely hidden loving Father, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.

fearless. I thought how ennobling the Spirit of Christ is. It gives such strength and dignity to character, while the selfishness and wickedness of the worldly spirit weakens it. As I saw dishonesty and craft cringing before honesty and integrity, I felt that this was the best object-lesson a young man could have to make him despise the one and cling to the other.'

'I am glad that you witnessed it, Dick. It will help you in the

path you have chosen.

'It does help me. I somehow cannot think of Mr. Moorhouse without feeling ashamed of myself, and resolving to do my utmost to lead a better life. He never preaches, either, but somehow he imparts an influence which makes a man feel small, but determined to do better and achieve something. He is not one of those mealy-mouthed people, either. You ought to have heard him go for old Parchment this afternoon. He fairly struck him dumb; he hedged him in on every side, and pounded at his meanness, his craft, his dishonesty, and his unscrupulousness, showing him his true character as he had probably never seen it before. I have witnessed many an interview, but never one to equal this.'

'Well, Dick, it has evidently taught you the value of a true, upright, moral character, which alone is really strong to face

the world.'

'It has taught me, and in such a way that I shall never

forget it.'

By this time they had reached home, and at once retired to their respective rooms, for it was now past eleven, which was considered very late for the country folks to be out of bed.

While the young people were out, Mr. Moorhouse said to his

wife anxiously:

'The more I see of old Parchment, the more I dislike him. I believe he will do us harm if ever he gets the chance.'

'I don't see how he can do us harm, John, so long as we do

what is right.'

'Neither do I, in one sense'; but he will stoop to any meanness or villainy to do us an injury—at least, this is my opinion. We shall have to keep our eyes and ears open.'

'But we can easily live down any scandal he may set affoat,

surely?

'He will not attack us in this way, for he knows we might retaliate, and retaliation might do infinitely more harm to him, who has his living to make, than to us, who could afford to laugh at what people might say.'



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It how do you think he could injure us?"

don't know, but I have an uneasy feeling that he will, and thoroughly. I have thwarted his wicked purposes twice and he will never forget, never forgive. This man will his pound of flesh."

h, let's change the subject, John. Are you going to do

ing for Dick?'

o; I don't see that he needs any pecuniary help at at. I think, when I return from London on Friday, I be able to clear the mortgages. Of course, the house is ery bad state of repair, but he can do this himself. It telp him to work out his own salvation. I believe the it of doing this, and the love he has for literary work, will be the means of him turning out something good. I see the best work in literature has been done by those who imply loved it for its own sake, but who were writing for

should express the fact another way, John. They wanted, because they were producing something which mankind not understand at the time, and so there was no market

e product of their labour.'

'ell expressed, little woman. From the biographical facts have come to light, some of our best authors were sitting

ing Friday he found Dick anxiously waiting his return. The mortgagees had, to his great astonishment, foreclosed. The fact was that Mr. Parchment had so defamed Dick's position that they believed they would not get a penny of their money unless they got it at once. To Dick's great delight and relief, his friend handed him a cheque which covered both mortgages and left a small balance in the bank. This was better than they had expected, but it turned out that some of the coins were very rare, and in consequence were of high value.

CHAPTER XIV

A PLEASANT PICNIC

ting the third week in July Mrs. Moorhouse received a refrom Mr. Bowen, in which he thanked her for the pressinvitation she had given him to spend the month of ust with them. He said that he would accompany bert and his family on July 29, and they would probably be by the four-thirty train. He was looking forward to a pleasant time with such a happy company as would be sered at Moor House.

n due time the party arrived. Dick and Ruth were invited inner to meet their friends, and asked to spend as much as they possibly could at Moor House, and, needless to 'I hope you will,' answered the host, with a mischievous smile, 'and mind you don't kick over the traces. Shall we now adjourn to the lawn? It is a calm evening, and the sunset will be glorious.'

When they had all got comfortably seated in the wicker

chairs, Mrs. Moorhouse said:

'Now, I think we said that our first picnic should be

to-morrow at Llanthony Abbey?'

'I am on the tiptoe of expectation to see the abbey,' said Herbert. 'I do hope we shall have a fine day. Have you ordered the mountain ponies, dad?'

'Yes; they will be here to-morrow morning at eight o'clock prompt. Your mother and Marian are taking the trap, and the

commissariat; the rest of us will be in the saddle.'

'If I am to ride a horse, I think I should feel safer inside,' said Mr. Bowen with a broad smile, 'for it's a long time since I had much to do with horse-flesh.'

'Old Thirdly has had your share,' replied Dick.

'The fun will be all the greater with a few novices,' said Mr. Moorhouse, 'especially up the steep mountain-sides.'

On the stroke of eight next morning, our party were all in their saddles except Aunty and Marian. Two ponies had been hired for Herbert and his wife. Ruth had promised the only spare pony they had to Mr. Bowen, saying that it would have given her late brother the greatest pleasure to have seen him on it. She and Dick had each their own. Mr. Moorhouse had his own, and another for the butler who was to accompany them. Mrs. Moorhouse and Marian had a good strong pony to drive, and it was well that it was so, for they could scarcely lift the hamper of provisions that was brought out and placed in the back of the trap.

Mrs. Moorhouse drove down the lower drive and through the town, while the others went along the upper drive and made straight for the hill, promising to wait for the trap at a given point. The morning was gloriously fine, and there was a nice breeze, and scarcely a cloud to be seen. The gentlemen

had their binoculars swung over their shoulders.

'We shall have a magnificent view to-day, Dick,' said Herbert.

'I'm not Dick,' answered Mr. Bowen.

Herbert looked back, saying:

'Hullo, old Fourthly; it's you, is it? Where's the Squire?'

Dick was nowhere to be seen. The fact was, he had gone round the carriage-road with the trap to look after the provisions.

'Where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered

together,' said Mr. Bowen.

'So we've got a "Fourthly," have we?' questioned Ruth

with an amused smile.

'You have a "Thirdly," replied Herbert, 'and I don't see why we should not have a "Fourthly." You'll find this gentleman longer-winded even than that sometimes. I believe he once had nearly a dozen heads, but we all forgave him, for

there was plenty of brain in each of them.'

'That reminds me,' interposed Mr. Moorhouse, 'of a little plan that I have had in my mind. Old Thirdly has not had a real holiday for many years. Do you think, "Fourthly," that if we fête you, feed you, and give you rides, drives and picnics during the week, you would be able to take his duty for two Sundays, and let him go off to Aberystwith?'

'I think I may be able to manage it without all the tempting

rewards you are offering for my services.'

'It's a bargain, then.

When they joined the rest of the party, Dick received a good deal of pleasant chaff, which he took all in good part. He said there were several nasty little hills in the narrow road, and he was afraid that the provisions over which the cook had spent so much time might get mixed up and speiled.

so much time might get mixed up and spoiled.

Each member of the party was in the best of spirits, for not a cloud hung over any of their lives, and no anxious thought occupied any of their minds. The merry peals of laughter, which sounded far and re-echoed among the mountainous cliffs, made the sheep look up from their grazing as if wondering what on earth was happening, and many of them jumped

up and scampered off for all they were worth.

When they arrived at the monastery at Llanthony they found Father Ignatius at home. He received them most cordially, chatted freely, and gave them a pressing invitation to stay and have lunch. They replied that they had brought food with them. But he persisted, saying that what they had brought would probably be rather dry. At last they accepted his cordial invitation. They were all charmed with the courtesy of the Father, and voted him a thorough gentleman. He was particularly chatty with Mr. Bowen, and they discussed many historical incidents in a friendly way. They did not always see eye to eye, but they agreed to differ.

A little surprise awaited the party when lunch-time arrived, a surprise which some of them by no means relished. The gentlemen were to lunch with the Fathers and the Brothers; the ladies with the nuns and the Sisters. After lunch Mr. Moorhouse wrote out a cheque and gave it to the holy Father as a small contribution towards his work. The party then took their leave and went on to the old abbey, or, to be correct, the priory. Arriving at this ancient ruin, they tethered their horses. Mr. Bowen, who was familiar with church architecture and deeply loved it, led the way, in his eagerness to explore the glory that remained of this noble house of prayer.

'Í should like to spend a few days in this locality,' said Marian.

'I have just been thinking that I should like a painting of these ruins, my dear,' replied Mr. Moorhouse, 'if it would not be asking too much.'

'You could not ask too much, Uncle,' answered Marian in a tone that revealed the depth of her gratitude for what had already been done for her.

Dick was wishing that she would make the same remark to

him, but he simply said:

'I will drive you over, Miss Turner. I can bring writing materials, so that my time will not be wasted.'

'What is the meaning of Llanthony, Dick?' asked Mr. Bowen.

'The word is derived from "Llan Ddewi nant Honddu"—i.e., "Church of David, on the brook, Honddu," he answered.

'And the original priory was founded by whom?'

'Hugh de Lacy, Earl of Hereford.'

'Well, in my humble opinion you are quite right in thinking that this is an admirable locality for your literary work. You know that our Charlotte Brontë wrote much on the lonely Yorkshire moors. I think your suggestion an excellent one. If it would not be troubling you too much, I should like to have the history of the old parish church here. I know that you have looked these matters up for your historical novel. I don't want you to give yourself away, you know. We shall all be pleased to buy the book when it comes out and to recommend it to others.'

'Thank you for your patronage. If I had not promised to dedicate it to Uncle here, I should have been delighted to confer the honour upon you.'

ometimes these honours are conferred upon family conns, interposed Uncle facetiously.

ohn!' cried his wife, stamping her foot, 'you're at it

beg your pardon,' he replied humbly.

the time they had viewed the ancient church the sun had led the top of the vast amphitheatre in the west. The fissures in the mountain-sides, caused by the tiny brooks waterfalls, which they saw at present trickling down like ks of silver, but which become wild, raging mountain nts during the winter's storms and melting snows, were beginning to look dark and gloomy with the shadows as un dipped behind the hills.

t is now four o'clock,' said Herbert; 'how soon the sun set to these people living on this side of the mountains! I we have some tea and then turn homeward. I shouldn't these mountains in the dark. Those shadows yonder

e me feel creepy already.'

f that is the case,' answered Dick, 'I vote a sandwich each a drink of lemonade, then up the valley and through the as soon as we can. Arrived there, we can take our tea rely in the glow of the setting sun, with a glorious view of valley far beneath us, and many objects of interest to

'Yes,' answered Mrs. Moorhouse; 'does it not seem as though those fleecy clouds, tinged with gold and amber, were the pearly gates, and just beyond them in that brightness, that the human eye can scarcely bear to look into, were "the realms of the blest"?'

They went on about a quarter of a mile further, and when they found a suitable place, a large table-cloth was spread out upon the grass, and the contents of the hamper were daintily arranged by the butler.

The water from the spring was soon boiling, and tea was

made.

During these arrangements Dick was looking after the

horses, with Herbert's help.

'We have to be Marthas, Herbert,' said Dick, pointing to Mr. Bowen, 'while Mary is sitting there in sweet contemplation.'

They had said during the afternoon that they would have most of the provisions to take back with them, seeing that they had lunched at the monastery; but, to the astonishment of all, they had only a few scraps left—not having taken into consideration that they had been breathing all day that best of all appetizers, the pure air of the mountains. Very little was said during the meal, for each seemed too much enraptured with the scene before him; but after it was over they began to note places of interest between Brecon on the left and Hereford on the right.

The party arrived at Moor House about eight o'clock. Dinner had been laid, but as none of them felt inclined for another meal at present, they decided to stay out on the lawn and talk over the events of the day.

After they had been talking together for nearly an hour, and conversation began to flag, Mr. Moorhouse asked where Dick and Marian were. No one had seen them since they returned.

'They are no doubt arranging their trips to Llanthony,' he

said, as he glanced knowingly at his wife.

The fact of the matter was that Dick had been watching for a favourable opportunity all day to get to know his fate with Marian, but had failed to find one, as the party had stuck well together. The passion of his love had become too strong for him to delay the matter any longer. Why should he delay? It was true he was penniless, but she was the same. What was the mystery of her life? Would this prevent their engagement? Would it make marriage impossible? Supposing

e was some one whom she loved, to whom she was in our bound. At any rate, anything was better than this bense. He would make the plunge; it was now or never. felt sure Mr. and Mrs. Moorhouse would have no objection; then, they were not her parents. Anyhow, he would ask; there could be no harm in that.

CHAPTER XV

THE KEPWORTHS

IONATHAN KEPWORTH was a woollen manufacturer in the West Riding. He was a plain, old-fashioned Yorkshireman, of that sturdy type which has contributed so largely to the wealth of this part of the county of broad acres. He had been brought up in a hard school, and he dearly loved to talk of his hardships and early struggles, and to compare them with the ease and luxury, and what he looked upon as the laziness of the young people of the present day. In relating the history of his life, he would begin at the time he was seven years of age, when he had to rise shortly after five o'clock in the morning, walk two miles, and be in the mill punctually at six. There were no School Boards in those days, he would say, and a good thing, too, for 'eddication' only made young people lazy, unfit, and unwilling to work. He had received very little education himself, only what he had picked up at odd times when in the company of educated people. Refined he was not; he rather boasted of his plainness in manner, style and deportment. His bluntness often became coarse and vulgar, especially among his workpeople.

He always used the vernacular in his conversation, whatever the company might be, whether rich or poor, learned or ignorant. His dialect was purely that of his employees. He was plain to coarseness in dress and manners. He had the reputation of being as 'cute a business man as went into Bradford Market or the Leeds Exchange. He could drive a bargain as hard as anyone. It was a common saying for miles round that 'If you get over old Kepworth, there's only one more to tackle.' He knew his business thoroughly, for he had made it. He was perfectly familiar with every machine and every loom, and what they ought to produce when working at full

This piece of gossip got to the ears of M said to his cashier:

'Go thee an' tell one et' women, an' shelse knoah, et ah say if ah 'ear ony on 'em to call my wife a beeast, ah'll sek 'em strai

Old Kepworth had built a large mansion and had had it furnished in accordance we About a year after the marriage a son was came on Kepworth's forty-third birthday, as his son and heir should be named after him was Jonathan. After two years another son time the choice of name was claimed by th decided upon Charles.

The younger of the two began early qualities, and the father, with an eye always said that Charlie would make an admiral rubbed his hands in great glee as he remark be able to take such unique designs of fancy ford Market as would put all others into the

Charlie, who inherited all his mother's aristocratic tastes, bitterly resented the id talents commercialized in this way; but possessed a considerable amount of tact and how to get her way, while at the same time sure that he was getting his, advised Charli his father's wish. When he had finished at by her tact and skill Charles.

would be better able to do the work his father wished him to do; but he would also qualify for something higher. Secretly she shared the aversion of Charles for the mill, and devoutly hoped that when he came home from the Continent his father would see the folly of insisting that his son should grovel in the mill when he might be winning fame and doing good work in the higher branches of art; but at present she simply said:

'If you will allow Charlie to go abroad to study under the great masters, I am confident that there would be no designer in England to come anywhere near him. It will mean a good deal of expense, I know, but I feel sure that you would be amply repaid; it would be a good investment. Charlie has the

talent; all he wants is the technique.'

'That's just what ah want,' replied her husband; 'nowt else like it i' th' country. Then aw cun get mi awn price, an' noa mistak, fer Mrs. Fashionplate wod give a fortun to hev sommat different ta onnybody else. He sal goa, lass—he sal goa, an'

tell him to keep 'is een oppen.'

While studying in the Leeds School of Art Charles had come from time to time into contact with a young lady studying at the same institution. She was the daughter of another manufacturer in the next valley a few miles from his home. Charles grew passionately fond of her, and, having much in common, they had many long chats together about pictures and painting. The acquaintance between the two ripened into love. They were in equal social positions, and there was no objection raised on either side. Only one condition was laid down by their elders—that they were too young as yet to think of marriage. Miss Whitaker had an elder sister who was already engaged to a steady young man named John Moorhouse, the son of a Leeds engineer. Charles and John often met at Valley View, where both the young men spent most of their spare time, especially Charles, who was not at all happy at home with his father, who could talk of nothing but designs, fancy goods, and the price they would be likely to fetch. Charles hated the mill and all connected with it. As to becoming a designer, he had not the remotest idea of becoming anything of the kind, but it was the only card he could play with his father if he were to have money enough for the tuition for which he was thirsting in order to complete his education.

Charles went abroad for two years. When he came back he and Eveline were to be married. They corresponded regularly

ng his absence. Letters were very frequent during the first but they became less frequent during the second year, yet ine was confident that all would be right when her lover ned. She was one of those sweet, trustful creatures who, I and transparent themselves, are unsuspicious of wrong in rs. She had always leaned upon her elder sister since her her's death, and had been treated more as a child than a ng woman. She knew little of the ways of the world, ing of its sins and follies.

he fact of the matter was Charles had got amongst a dedly fast set of young men, and was spending more time money than he ought. He had been so pent up and kept in at home that when he felt the freedom from restraint he est lost his head for a time. He would no doubt have more recklessly into sin and folly had it not been for the ght of Eveline. Her sweetness and purity haunted him in it is follies, and made him feel utterly ashamed of himself, it not been for her he would probably never have returned lingland at all. He was very happy, dividing his time een Italy, Germany, and other countries.

is father had settled ten thousand pounds upon him on his ty-first birthday, but Charlie knew that he was expecting times that amount back, that it was only a business invest-

CHAPTER XVI

THE LOVERS FLY

On his return Charlie allowed himself to be persuaded to settle down to work at the mill, and for nearly twelve months he put in a fair amount of labour. His father was for a time satisfied when he saw all his looms working with original, unique, and beautiful designs, made by his artist-son, as he called him. As he had anticipated, there was nothing like them or to compete with them in the market. The result was that there was a great demand for Kepworth's dress-goods. The name became known far and wide. People never thought that behind these beautiful designs such a great tragedy was being enacted. The number of expensive looms was doubled, and Kepworth's mill was running night and day, while many of the other mills were only working four days a week.

The business prospered in such a remarkable way as to exceed their most sanguine expectations. A large four-storied block had been built during Charlie's absence and a large new weaving-shed. In six months' time these were both filled with machinery. What was before a small, unpretentious-looking building, and a small shed with about three or four hundred looms in it, the power for which was obtained by water-wheels and a small engine, now became one of the largest concerns in the West Riding. Kepworth's mill became the envy of the

whole district.

As the business prospered, Kepworth became more and more grasping and miserly. As his riches increased, he swore that he was on the verge of ruin. The more work there was turned out, the more he would urge on all in his employ. As time went on he dreaded the workhouse, and the fear of poverty seemed to haunt him like a nightmare. He began to sorely begrudge the time Charlie spent in the studio he had fitted up at home, where he spent most of his leisure.

t last Mr. Whitaker had given his consent for the wedding ake place in three months' time. It seemed as if everyg was going smoothly with the young couple, and no doubt ould have been well had not Kepworth been seized by a rly thirst for gain. This spirit, once latent, had gradually loped, until now it appeared in all its naked reality. ters came to a crisis shortly before the time fixed for rlie's marriage. His father forbade him to enter his studio ny time except Saturday afternoons and during the week ings. Charlie replied that every loom in the shed was ing full time, night and day, and there were a number of gns that had not yet been used. They had also orders in he old ones that would keep them going for twelve months east, so he did not feel that he was at all neglecting his He had often laboured far into the night with the gns which were being worked off now, so he felt justified lowing himself a little time to prepare his pictures for the se to which he soon hoped to take his bride.

tell you, father,' he said, 'there is no need for more

gns at present.'

Then ah tell tha we due want more,' replied his father pishly, in a rasping voice.

Then I say we don't. If you doubt my word, ask

and taking hold of his heavy stick, which he now had to use when he got about.

'I'm not, unless I think fit,' answered Charlie firmly and

fiercely.

The old man looked at his defiant son with glaring eyes, and raised his stick, and would no doubt have dealt him a heavy blow with it, had his wife not stepped between them and taken hold of his arm. The old man sat down again, uttering the most biting words about laziness and robbery, interspersed with the foulest oaths and curses. He spoke of the money he had spent on Charlie's education, his foreign travel, his board and lodging, money to meet his expensive tastes—of course, grossly exaggerating them—until Charlie could stand it no longer. He rose quickly, went into the hall, put on his hat and overcoat, slammed the door behind him, and walked rapidly down the drive.

He took train for Bradford, went straight to an hotel, where he met some of his former pals, and, scarcely knowing what he did, he ordered a glass of whisky, which he thought might help him to drown his trouble. He had not tasted intoxicants for a long time, and his brain was soon fired. He began to treat the company recklessly, and by eleven o'clock he was

himself helplessly drunk.

The following morning Mr. Whitaker went to Bradford Market as usual. At one o'clock he went to his hotel for lunch. Here he met a fellow-manufacturer, who was jealous of and bitterly hated the Kepworths. He had heard of Charlie's escapade, and he told a long story of the dissipated habits of this youth, and said what a fine son-in-law he would make if he continued in a career like this. His facts were embellished by many exciting bits of fiction, not only of his own making, for they had passed through a few imaginative minds before they had reached his ears; yet he gave them all as true, and presented them in the most irritating manner he possibly could. He saw that he had a chance, or thought he had, of hitting old Kepworth through his son. At any rate, he felt that if he could only drive Charles away, or get him driven away, the prosperity at the mills would be at an end. Mr. Whitaker was entirely ignorant of the secret motive of his informant, and left him with the impression that Charles was a real profligate, and had been for some time past leading a double life; that while they had thought him straight and honourable he had been leading a life of deception.

bout an hour after he had heard the story he was hurrying be station to catch a train for home, when he and Charlie face to face.

s it true what I have just heard?' Mr. Whitaker asked

y .

That depends upon what you have heard,' replied Charlie tly.

Don't be insolent, young man.'

didn't intend to be.'

is it true that you have been deceiving us and leading a

Emphatically, no!'

s it true that you were helplessly drunk last night?'
don't deny that I had a few glasses of whisky.'
don't want to bandy words. Were you drunk or were

not?

Probably I may have been. I have no very clear recollec-

of what happened.'

Then there shall be no wedding. I cannot trust my ther with a man who has no self-respect, who has not love igh for her to keep him from doing that which he knows almost break her heart. Good-bye.'

e hurried off to the station, leaving Charlie standing as if

with cold water, then sat down again. She had scarcely done so when she jumped up with a start.

'What was that?' she said in sudden alarm. 'Was it a foot-

step on the gravel outside?'

She pressed her hands once more on her throbbing temples, and stood with her back to the fire and her face towards the window. In a moment or two a few pebbles came rattling against the glass. She rushed to the blind, pulled it to one side, and looked out. There she saw Charles standing on the lawn waving his hand. She slipped on a shawl, quietly unlocked the door, and went cautiously down the stairs and out by a side-door. Charlie took her into his arms, and they both wept for a few moments in silence; then Charlie, pulling himself together, told her the whole facts of the case, and, to his honour be it said, he did not spare himself. He told her how he had been insulted and misunderstood at every turn, and that he was sick and tired of being knocked from pillar to post. He would never return home again, he said, but he wanted to say good-bye, and to give her from his own lips an idea of what had happened.

'But surely you are not going away, Charlie?' she questioned anxiously.

'That is what I have made up my mind to do. I have given you the true facts of the case, neither adding nor subtracting from them, so that you might not think too hardly of me when I am gone. Now, do you think that I deserve the treatment that I am receiving?'

'You don't.'

'Then what am I to do? I have never been happy at home, and your father has forbidden our marriage. This scandal is in everybody's mouth, and they are, as usual, enlarging it as they pass it along. I have looked at the case from every standpoint, and I am fully convinced that it is best for me to go away. I sincerely promise you, Eveline, that I will never again fall into the error I committed yesterday, so you need not be anxious on that point. I feel that I cannot say good-bye, but it must be. I have the horse tethered to the gate at the bottom of the drive, and my portmanteaux are in the trap, so I must be going. I do hope it may not be good-bye for ever.'

'It shall not be good-bye at all,' she replied, with decision. 'What time does the train leave?'

^{&#}x27;At three-twenty, and it is nearly midnight now.'

Can you spare fifteen minutes?'

Why?'

Because, if you can, I am coming with you.'

Never!

It is quite true. My mind is made up. We have pledged troth to each other, and I am not going to break my word. have been cruelly wronged, and I will stand by you to the

te was going to speak, but she was off, and had gently ed the door behind her, after turning back to ask him to. Was this the Eveline of last week? he wondered. How aged she was! How firm and resolute! No one would be thought that this delicate form encased such a strong acter and will.

le had not long to wait before Eveline appeared with a manteau, asking him in a whisper to take it to the trap, e she went for another. She brought another, and then t back for a hat-box.

We have barely time,' said Charlie, 'for we shall have a mile drive to Shipley Station.'

Why not go to Keighley Station?'

Because enquiries will be made, and going to Shipley will w them off the scent for a little, at any rate.'

veline stood up in the trap for a few moments looking

keep the note I am sending for security if any fuss should be made.'

When they arrived at the station, Charlie followed out his

plans.

'I'll take a ticket for Derby to begin with,' he said, as he put down the portmanteau on the platform; 'then we'll cross country to Lincoln, and from there on to London.'

They were soon comfortably settled down in the night mail

from the North and rushing away towards the South.

- On the following morning a maid went and knocked at the door of Mr. Whitaker's room. When he opened the door and saw the blanched face of the servant who stood trembling before him, he asked:
 - 'Whatever's the matter?'

'Oh, sir-oh, sir!'

'What's up, girl-what's up?'

'Miss Eveline, sir—Miss Eveline!'
It was now his turn to look concerned.

'What has happened?' he asked in anxious tones.

'Her room is empty, sir, and her bed has not been slept in,' answered the maid.

Mr. Whitaker rushed off just as he was, with the lather-brush in his hand and his chin covered with foam. He found to his dismay that the words of the maid were only too true.

'Whatever has happened? Whatever can be done?' he

cried frantically.

He filled up a telegraph-form, asking John Moorhouse to come at once.

About half-past nine John Moorhouse was going over his letters and dictating replies when he received Mr. Whitaker's telegram. He scribbled a note to his wife, saying that he would probably not be home for lunch, as he had urgent business to attend to. He left this with one of the office-boys, asking him to take it up to Mrs. Moorhouse about twelve o'clock; then he started off as fast as he could to the station, wondering all the way what had happened.

As the train was drawing up to the platform at his destination, Moorhouse put his head out of the window and saw

Mr. Whitaker pacing the platform.

'What in the world's up?' he asked, as he alighted from the train.

'Nothing is up, John, but everything down. My sweet bird has flown.'

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CHAPTER XVII

DICK MAKES THE PLUNGE

ALL the day of the picnic Dick had been trying, as we have already mentioned, to get a chance to speak privately to Marian, but the party had kept so close together that all his efforts had proved futile. He had not enjoyed the picnic as well as he would have done had it not been for the suspense. No scenery they had beheld, except the glorious panorama they had seen from the Bwlch Pass, had taken his mind off the all-important subject. One thought had filled his mind, one consuming desire had thrilled his soul-to know his fate regarding Marian. When they returned to Moor House, he managed to whisper to her without being observed, asking if she could spare a few minutes, for he wanted to speak to her in the conservatory.

When they had got into a shady nook among the rockery and ferns, they sat down for some moments before either spoke. Dick had rehearsed many times what he would say and how he would say it; but somehow words would not come. At last, with a great effort, he said:

'It's been a delightful day.'

'Yes,' replied Marian, trying with all her strength to suppress She felt that if she laughed outright it would her feelings. make Dick look foolish, but the humour of the situation was almost too much for her to hide.

'When will you be able to go over to Llanthony to begin your painting, Miss Turner?'

'I don't know,' replied Marian with apparent carelessness.
'Miss Turner, may I say "Marian"?' he questioned as he half turned and looked her full in the face.

Their eyes met for a moment, and then hers dropped; and, after a little hesitation, she answered softly:

Why not?'

Oh, Marian, I'm so glad, for this gives me hope. You not have failed to read the secret of my heart. For a long e my feelings have been too strong and deep to hide. is, I have loved you ever since I first saw you, in the ter sunshine, painting that wonderful picture, "Desolation." haps that is why it has such a fascination for me. I felt n that you and I were made for each other. We were both and somewhat lonely. You no doubt noticed that I n passed you, though it was not by chance, as it may have eared to you. Ruth did for me what I had not the courage lo, and I shall always be grateful to her for it. Of course, did not know anything about my feelings when she first ted you to the Manor. I have longed with a passion I not express to tell you my true feelings; but I have feared hesitated, knowing my unworthiness. I have so little to r; but when I have got the house in repair I can offer you omfortable home, at least.'

When Marian loves,' she interposed gently, 'she loves the

itual and not the material.'

I am more than delighted to hear you say this, not simply ause it helps my suit, but because I believe it to be the

'When we are engaged, you have a right to know the secret of my past, and I confess to you in confidence that my name is not Turner.'

'That only confirms a suspicion that I have had for a long time; but it does not alter my feelings in the least. I know you have not done wrong, but, as Mr. Moorhouse says, you have no doubt been cruelly wronged.'

'Does Mr. Moorhouse share this suspicion?' she questioned

with a frightened look.

'He does,' Dick answered; 'and we are determined to protect you in every possible way, whatever the evil genius

may be that dogs your footsteps.'

'I should have told Mr. and Mrs. Moorhouse the history of my life before now, but my brother is seriously involved, and it is for his sake that I have kept silent for so long. will, no doubt, consider me very ungrateful if they have had this suspicion, and yet I have never told them. They will think that I consider them unworthy of my confidence.

'They don't think you ungrateful at all, Marian. rather share my feeling, and love you all the more for being so constant in your love to some person or persons who are

undeserving of it.'

'Oh, Mr.—oh, Dick, it is so kind of you to say so!'

He seized her hand as he said passionately:

' Marian, do vou love me?'

'Yes,' she murmured. 'I have shared your feelings from the first evening we met at the Manor, and I have often wished that I could remove the cloud that hung so heavily over you, for I felt that your case was like mine: it was not a self-inflicted burden, but the "sins of the fathers."

'Oh, Marian, this is the happiest moment I have ever experienced. I have long been tortured by hopes and fears, thinking perhaps there was some one in the mystery of your past who had possession of your heart; but now my mind is at rest. Now we can bear each other's burdens, and try to make each other's lives brighter and happier.'

Marian then told Dick in brief the story of her life. When they joined the rest of the party, the latter were just coming indoors, for the shades of night were drawing on; but notwithstanding the dim light, they could see the radiance on the faces of the two who had just joined them, and knew that something unusual had happened. Most of them guessed the truth. As they were going leisurely into the drawing room,

n slipped her arm round Mrs. Moorhouse, and asked ionately:

untie, may I speak to you privately for a few minutes?'
ertainly, my dear,' answered Mrs. Moorhouse, as she
d and led the way into the breakfast-room, where the two
own on a small settee near the window.

untie, I have something important to tell you,' said Marian, ing and looking Mrs. Moorhouse straight in the face.

r large grey eyes sparkled with delight, which made is suddenly start, as if some distant recollection of some or some circumstance was now brought to her remember. She threw her arms round Marian, and hugged and if her as she had never done before. She could see that an's lashes had suddenly become wet, and her own were ely dry. She could not tell why, but her thoughts had back to Valley View, and the happy hours she had spent with her sister.

vell, darling, she said; 'now give Auntie all your little

was now Marian's turn to start, for she could not give all, ver worthy Mrs. Moorhouse might be of them—not now, y rate; sometime, when the cloud lifted, she would do it y. She little knew that the darkness would deepen before loud lifted. She began shall to express the thoughts that

Dick was standing with his back to the fireplace. She joined their hands, and in sweet tones said, as she turned and faced the rest of the party:

'Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put

asunder.'

'I wouldn't stand that if I were you, Mr. Bowen,' said Mr. Moorhouse. 'Surely that's too much for your trade unionism to allow.'

But his words were scarcely noticed as the rest gathered round the happy pair to give them hearty congratulations. This was a happy moment for all, and, as Mrs. Moorhouse said, it was a fitting climax to such a pleasant day.

When Mr. and Mrs. Moorhouse had retired to their room, the former, bubbling over with the fulfilment of his prophecy,

said:

'Didn't I tell you what was going to happen? I knew it! Yes; and there will be another before long, mark my words if there isn't.'

He was surprised when his wife did not respond. He turned round from the dressing-table to know the reason, and, to his surprise, saw that she was quietly weeping.

'Why, little woman, whatever's the matter?' he asked

tenderly.

' John, who is Marian?'

'Why, dear, why do you ask?'

'She has taken me back to-night to Valley View, and to the happy times Eveline and I spent together, as I have never been taken back since I left. She has Eveline's eyes, hair, and voice too. I must have been blind not to have seen it before. When she came to tell me of Dick's proposal, with her upturned face, as she half reclined upon the floor with her elbows on my knee, she looked exactly as Eveline did years ago, when she came to tell me of Charlie's proposal. I cannot shake off the thought. The two pictures were identical. As in her simplicity she repeated the word "Auntie," I felt it was no mere assumption, but a reality.'

'I think your nerves are a little bit unstrung to-night, my

dear, with the excitement.'

'Not a bit of it, John; I was not at all excited before the thought came. Now I want your honest opinion on the matter. What do you think of Marian?'

'I think that she's jolly lucky to get hold of Dick.'

'John, don't tease. I am asking you a serious question.'

...... might some day favour us with

'Do you think we had better tell her am sure it would add to her happiness truth were known. We need not ask her Christian name.'

'It would have to be done very carefu her to fear that we are prying into her se as though we were taking a mean advar seeing that she is partly dependent upon

'Yes, that is so; but I will think and Needless to say, it was long before M doze off to sleep. Her thoughts were aw she was re-living the days of her childh asleep at last, it was only to dream of Evel kneeling before her as of yore, confiding it

betrothal.

Next morning, when they had finished be house began her usual daily tasks, but her his she was ill at ease. He heard her giving one he noticed that she stammered, scarcely known to the noticed that she stammered, scarcely known to do the second to the morning tasks away for about two hours. When she reason house invited her into the morning-roor marian was a trifle shy. It seemed easier, love-making in the evening than in the full ling sun. She thought that Mrs. Moorhou to her about Dick. Thus she was head!

In many respects she was glad of this, for if Auntie had spoken she would have been expected to speak, and the consequences might have been serious.

'I had only one sister, whose name was Eveline——'

'Why—why—that was mother's name!'

'My sister—my sister—Eveline married a young man named Charles Kepworth.'

'Oh!' came the cry from Marian's lips, as her face turned

pale as death, 'my name—my real—name is Kep——'

She could get no further. Mrs. Moorhouse clasped her in her arms, and both sobbed and wept, for how long they did not know.

'Now, Marian, my lost one, my own, I have at last found her for whom I have sought and longed, never dreaming that she was under my own roof. It was thoughts of you that I had in my mind when we first decided upon coming to live in the South. Oh, how I prayed that we might find you! was only talking to John-your uncle, you know-last week about our lost one, and, now that we have got settled, he said that he would go into Surrey to try and find you, for you were somewhere in that locality when we last heard about you. Now, darling, I don't want to pry into any of your secrets; I don't want to know why you were alone here if you do not choose to tell. You may ask what aroused my suspicions. About twenty-seven years ago your mother came to tell me of your father's proposal, as you came last night. You are the very image of her. I must have been blind not to have seen it before. How strangely God has led us!'

Marian thought it best to make a clean breast of it, so she told all; and both wept together as she related the cause of

her exile.

Just as Marian was finishing, Dick's voice was heard in the hall, calling:

'Marian! Marian!'

Mrs. Moorhouse went to the door, and said quietly:

'Dick, come here.'

'Whatever's the matter?' he exclaimed, as he noticed that both had been weeping.

'Allow me to introduce you to my real niece, Miss Marian

Kepworth.'

Dick stood, looking puzzled, as if he did not know what to make of it.

Mrs. Moorhouse then told him how her suspicions had been

used, and how she had found out who Marian was. Needto say, Dick fully shared the happiness of both.

But I can hardly understand it,' he said, looking perced. 'How strange that you should both have been led

e in this manner!'

God's ways are past finding out, Dick; but I think we ll all have our faith strengthened by this wonderful leading. bld my husband last night of a plan I had in my mind of cing Marian a present on her wedding-day if I found that opinions were correct. I may as well do it now, seeing t my curiosity has been satisfied so soon, and I feel that I not justified in postponing the matter. I think she told, Dick, that she was almost penniless and almost friend-

She did.'

Well, she is neither. Now, the fact is, I have about nty-five thousand pounds in the bank for her.'

Never!' exclaimed Marian.

It is true. Shortly after Eveline went away father died, the mill was sold. As it happened, it fetched a good te. The money was divided, and I banked my sister's re. It has been accumulating ever since. It will not be than the sum I have mentioned.'

CHAPTER XVIII

MR. BOWEN FOLLOWS DICK'S EXAMPLE

JUST as the trio were discussing Marian's good-fortune, Mr. Moorhouse came in. His wife called him and introduced him as she had done Dick. Then followed a brief explanation, to which he listened with the deepest interest. He questioned Marian on many points, and expressed his deep regret that he had judged Charlie so harshly. He was very much affected with the latter part of Marian's story and the cause of her exile.

'Now, John,' said Mrs. Moorhouse, 'you are beginning to see the meaning of the hand guiding "via Malvern" and the cloud-finger pointing westward.'

'Yes,' he replied, 'but I never thought it would come to

this.'

'What's the meaning of this parliamentary meeting?' asked

Ruth, who had just arrived for lunch.

'Come here, Ruth,' called Mrs. Moorhouse; and the three ladies withdrew into the morning-room, leaving the gentlemen standing in the hall, discussing the wonderful discovery.

'I was right, you see. Marian had not the slightest suspi-

cion,' said Mr. Moorhouse.

'I knew that,' replied Dick.

'Marian gave you her confidence before Auntie, then?'

'Only a few hours before.'

Just then Mr. and Mrs. Herbert came in with the children. Mr. Moorhouse saluted them with the startling assertion:

'Marian, the mysterious, has disappeared!'

'What do you mean?' asked Herbert, looking puzzled.

'Marian Turner has gone—sunk into oblivion,' he answered, with well-feigned seriousness.

'Never!' exclaimed Herbert, with a frightened look.

Indeed she has, and Marian Kepworth has come in her

Never!' he repeated again.

Go and see,' replied his father, as he pointed over his ulder with his thumb in the direction of the morning-room, n a few minutes the gong sounded for lunch, and the occuts of the morning-room came forth to join those in the and they all filed into the dining-room, chatting gaily of wanderer's return. Marian was the heroine of the hour, the had hardly any word or look for anyone else. She that she had once more her sister by her side, and was rengther youthful days.

I'm delighted to think, Marian, that you and I will be shours when you leave our house.'

It strikes me she won't leave very soon; she's too well interrupted her husband.

John, you're an inveterate tease,' replied his wife.

Now, uncle,' said Marian, 'you'd better behave yourself.

ive a right to chastise you now, you know.'

Yes, I understand. We are living in an age of women's ts. When are you going to have those pictures of the pey and mountains ready?' he asked with a comical smile, a added: 'I suppose those excursions will be indefinitely

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opposition from one of the farmers, who said they would damage his land by trespassing, and by stemming the current would cause the river to overflow in time of flood. They appealed to me, as they had elected me managing director. I went to see the farmer, but he would not listen to reason; so I am trying to buy the fields in question. The land adjoins mine, being only separated by the road, and it will suit my purpose very well.'

This was his way of putting the matter; whatever he did for others, he never tried to make them feel their indebtedness,

but rather that he was doing it for his own interest.

'It will be a good thing for the young fellows to have some-

thing to do-some objective to work for.'

'They are talking of forming a club and making me

President,' said Mr. Moorhouse, laughing.

- 'What's that you are saying, Uncle?' asked Marian, whose boat, pulled by Dick, drew up and bumped against theirs.
 'That the young fellows are going to get up a boat club.'
- 'I'll give them a subscription of five pounds to start with,' she answered with a merry laugh.

'I'll give another five,' said Herbert.

- 'That's splendid!' replied Mr. Moorhouse. 'What will you give, little woman?'
 - 'I will double theirs,' answered his wife, smiling. 'Out of my purse, eh?' he asked facetiously.

'Yes, if you prefer it,' she replied.

'I must see some of my committee at once. The banks will be closed now, and some of them will be at liberty. Will you take me up to the lock and let me land?'

While they were rowing back Mr. Bowen said:

'I should be delighted if canoes could be got in time for a

regatta before I leave.

Will you join our committee, then? We'll have a meeting this evening. You know more about these things than we do, and your advice would be very helpful. You would no doubt be able to tell us where we could get the boats at once.'

Mr. Bowen replied that he had no objection to helping them in any way he could, but he had been thinking of doing something else during the evening, and his eyes wandered in the direction of Ruth.

'I told you that you were not to come here to work.'

'And yet you ask me to join this committee!'

'This is not work, man. It's fun—the best of fun! You ought

club. I want "His Reverence" here t 'Why, dad, you're quite a boy agai

looked affectionately at his father.

'And just as foolish,' answered his m

'Foolish, eh! Hasn't the dead corbeen found?' he replied, as he put h shoulder and kissed her; and even Dicipalous, and had nothing to forgive.

The bellman had been sent round the I the meeting for the formation of a boat c ing came the enthusiasm knew no be tradesmen had already subscribed for the let out on hire, the profits going to the resonance of the solution of the profits going to the resonance of the solution of the profits going to the resonance of the profits going

'I am delighted to see such a large 'instead of this being the committee, I to form a committee out of those present that there would be a response like this.'

'Never seen anything like it before si

. 24

'There has been already thirty pounds promised towards the club, and I don't see why some of the gentry outside the town should not be asked to subscribe. Indeed, I believe some of them would feel hurt if they were not allowed to join us. I don't know much about boats and boating myself, but I have a clerical friend here who is an expert on these matters, and I shall call upon him to speak and to advise us what to do for the best. Before doing so I should like all those who are desirous of joining the club to stand, so that he may have a better idea of our needs by learning the approximate

membership.

Nearly half of those present stood up, and Mr. Bowen was then called upon to speak. He rose to his feet while the audience gave a modest cheer. He was a stranger among them, and he saw at once that they were somewhat conservative, and he would have to win his way, but he soon had his audience with him. He spoke wittily of the clubs with which he had been connected, of their mistakes and failures, and of the various and humorous escapades he had experienced with them. The men laughed and cheered in turns. His sound common sense and manly utterance fully won their hearts. When he had finished speaking he left the room, got his bicycle, which he had left in the care of an old man in a cottage close by, and was soon at Moor House. As he approached, he caught sight of Ruth sitting under the rockery on the edge of the pond. He put his bicycle in an empty stall in the stable, and was soon sitting by Ruth's side.

'Do you care for a walk?' he asked, after telling her about

the meeting.

'I should enjoy it very much, for I have been sitting nearly

all day.'

They walked slowly up the drive in the direction of the Manor, earnestly discussing moral, social, and religious questions, until they had reached the little churchyard at Cusop, and turned mechanically through the lych-gate and up the churchyard path.

'I have often thought,' said Ruth, 'as I have read of the work in the slums, that I should like to join in it, even though

it might mean great self-sacrifice.'

Mr. Bowen grasped the opportunity and asked earnestly, 'Would you like to join me? I often feel lonely in my work. I have felt so more than ever since I was here on my last visit. I felt that I must speak to you on this question

ile I was here this time, and unwittingly you have now given the opportunity. This thought has been uppermost in mind during my leisure moments since we were first intro-

ed. Shall we sit down here for a little while?"

Ruth gave a sudden start as she comprehended her surndings, for this was the flat tombstone of the Martyr's ave. Neither of them spoke for some time. Mr. Bowen

s the first to break the silence, saying:

I have felt that there was a strange undefinable affinity ween us ever since we first met. I have met hundreds of ing ladies in the course of my parochial and social duties, never was my soul thrilled and influenced so strongly as first night we met. The more we have come into contact, stronger this feeling has grown. I could not speak to you these matters in the midst of your trouble, but I did my it to help you to bear your burden.'

You have helped me more than I can tell, she murmured. I have little to offer you, Miss Llewellyn. I feel that I am ling upon you to make a great sacrifice in some respects; I know what it would mean to you to leave these beautiful roundings for a dingy and grimy city parish. I have no vate means. My father died when I was young, and his airs were not as flourishing as they might have been. As a

'No,' she answered firmly.

He looked her full in the face with an expression of unutterable sadness. Their natures were both of the deeper kind, and their feelings were extremely sensitive.

'Then you refuse my offer?' he asked sadly.

'No,' she answered; 'but I don't offer you hope, I give you certainty.'

'Ruth!' he exclaimed passionately, with a sudden change

of feeling, 'can it be true that you are mine?'

'Yours,' she answered softly.

He took both her hands in his and kissed her tenderly. They sat and talked for a little while in the solemn stillness and holy calm which surrounded them. All Nature seemed at rest. The soft moonlight was casting weird shadows among the tombs, and the grey old church, close by, looked ghostly in the uncertain dimness. But this weirdness caused no tremor of fear in the souls of these two poetic natures; they rather enjoyed the charm of the tranquil scene around them. They felt in close touch with the spiritual—the eternal. At last Ruth asked:

'What is the time, Alfred?'

'My word, it's half-past ten!' said Mr. Bowen, after looking

very closely at his watch.

'I won't go back to Moor House to-night. Will you tell Dick you left me at home?' she said, as they walked down the path towards the Manor.

'I know what it is, my dear. You want me to stand all the

chaff of the company.'

'Not at all, Alfred. I shouldn't mind it a bit, for I know that it will be good-humoured enough.'

'Good night,' he said warmly, as he kissed her at the gate.

'Good night, Alfred. Tell Mrs. Moorhouse that I will be down by ten o'clock to-morrow morning for the trip to Llangorse Lake.'

'All right,' he answered cheerily, as he threw her another kiss.

The Rev. Alfred Bowen, the sedate-looking clergyman, felt quite frivolous. As he hurried down to Moor House, his feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground. He went as though treading on air. It seemed only a stone's throw from one place to the other, though in reality it was over a mile.

The company had been discussing boating and boat-clubs and the coming regatta, and only now and again had wondered

t had become of Ruth and their clerical friend. Marian they had suddenly disappeared she knew not where. When Bowen entered the room alone they all asked in chorus:

Where's Ruth?'

I left her at home,' he answered lamely. 'We had a walk a long chat together, and she thought she would not come k to-night; but I was to tell you that she would be down

ten o'clock to-morrow morning.'

A long chat, young man,' said Mr. Moorhouse—' I should nk you have had a long chat. Why, it's nearly eleven ock. I thought you wanted a long chat when you left the eting so hurriedly this evening. Is the great transaction ne?'

Mr. Bowen blushed and stepped towards him with a radiant ile upon his face, and stretched out his hand, saying:

Won't you congratulate me?

I will, said Mrs. Moorhouse, intercepting him and gripping

hand.

Mr. Bowen was surrounded in a moment, and pulled, ged, and jostled, until he almost felt as if he had got into treet brawl. He said that his hand would ache for days er being in so many vices.

Next day they had a very pleasant picnic to Llangorse

CHAPTER XIX

MARIAN'S HISTORY

WHEN Charlie and Eveline arrived in Derby in the early hours of the morning they felt cold and cheerless. The passion of the previous day had somewhat evaporated. But the thoughts of cruelty, insult, and injury were still surging in Charlie's brain; and the words of her sweetheart on the lawn were still ringing in Eveline's ears. While they were having a cup of tea in the refreshment-room, Charlie said:

'I think we had better book to Lincoln next, as I said before. That will probably throw our friends off the scent.'

When they arrived at Lincoln they had breakfast, and after a few hours' rest Charlie took Eveline to see the cathedral. They would have liked to stay to evensong, but the fear of being pursued still haunted them, so they decided to push on.

Had they only known that their pursuers would be baffled when they got to Derby, they would have been much easier in their minds. This, however, was the case. When Mr. Whitaker and John Moorhouse got to Derby, they made the most careful inquiries; but they could find nothing which pointed to the identity of the persons they sought. When they had done what they could and failed, they returned northward by a late train, disconsolate and depressed.

Late in the evening Charlie and Eveline arrived at King's Cross. He had suggested to her a certain hotel where he knew that they would be comfortable, but she had replied that she would rather stay at another, while he might put up at the one he had mentioned.

Classia mentioned

Charlie got a licence the following morning, and when the specified time had elapsed they were quietly married.

They spent about a fortnight in an hotel in North London until they had found a suitable house and got it furnished.

him for hours, sometimes chatting on times criticizing his work and making

In a little over a year Eveline presers on and heir. She said she was rathe had hoped that it would be a girl. however, she had her wish, for a darthought it the prettiest baby in all the another joy at this time, for Charlie has his work recognized, and the satisfactic pictures hung.

Their joy was somewhat clouded, he Charles had received from his mother that his brother and Mr. Whitaker he bitter words had been spoken, and that he would never forgive Charles for tak and bringing upon the family the disgra

'Never mind, Charlie,' said his wife, and none could be happier together than They went little into society, apart fr were in the same profession as Charlie.

Eveline helped her husband by encourappointments and sympathizing with his he possessed artistic gifts in no small define the more delicate touches to his pictures that they would never have been hung it her genius.

the maid brought in a black-edged envelope which the postman had just delivered. Charlie saw that it came from his mother, and guessed its contents. His father was dead. He called his wife and read the letter to her. Neither of them shed a tear at this intelligence. He who has no sympathy to give, need not grieve when others do not sympathize with him. Sympathy begets sympathy. Certainly 'Old' Kepworth had shown very little to either his children or anyone else. All that was said after the letter had been read was:

'He has gone to his reward.'

A short time after his father's death Charlie received the just share of his profits from the mill, with half the value of the buildings, machinery, and stock, from his brother Jonathan. A few months later they took a house at Farnham, in Surrey, near the home of Mr. Porter, a friend of Charlie's.

As their boy, Angelo, grew up, it was a sore disappointment, both to father and mother, that he began to develop the coarse

tastes of his grandfather.

'We must do our best,' said Charlie to his wife, 'to break the power of this coarse, selfish spirit. I can see my father

every time I look at the boy and watch his actions.'

Marian early began to develop the artistic tastes of her parents, and even as a child she surprised her elders by her remarkable skill in sketching and drawing. This, and the sweetness of her disposition, caused her to be beloved by all who knew her. She was the idol of her father and mother. Angelo would notice this, and try to invent some way of punishing Marian, and thus vent the spleen of his jealous spirit.

When Marian was about seventeen, her mother became seriously ill, and for some time lingered between life and death. She had never been physically very strong, and the doctor gave very little hope of her recovery. All was done that human attention and skill could do, but she quietly passed away. This blow fell so heavily upon Charlie that he never really recovered. His wife and he had been everything to each other.

The deep sensitive nature of Marian was staggered by the blow, but when she saw the suffering of her father—saw him wandering from room to room like some one demented—she braced herself up and tried to hide her own grief for his sake. She unconsciously lessened her own sorrow by thus trying to help her broken-hearted parent.

'Then it's a bargain,' she exclaimed.

She knew that in this way she would be able tom brooding. She purposely kept plying him wit he wanted to get sketches of the most out-of-the nd when the doctor advised a change, she was n get some sea-views, or the mountain scenery of nd they went to stay for some weeks in Zermat laces.

Mrs. Smith, her old nurse, proved herself invaluese trying times. She managed the housekeepi ere doing it for herself. Marian found her counf the utmost importance.

Angelo was at the university now, and very ome even during the vacations. He excused hin ing that he had been invited to the homes of two is chums. He was constantly writing home farian intercepted the letters, and gave to her nose she thought he ought to read. She often noney in such sums that her housekeeping all everely taxed. Fortunately, her father took iterest in his financial affairs, so she was able et money without troubling him.

Do as she would, Marian saw that her father winking, and becoming thin and pale. It was well nat she had many sympathizers among their neitiends, or the strain upon her nerves would have at. Her father was not by any means the

CHAPTER XX

ANGELO

In August Mr. Kepworth became too weak to rise from his bed. The doctor advised Marian to get a trained nurse, for it was evident that the anxiety and constant watching were becoming too great a tax upon her strength.

One day, when her father was a little brighter than usual, he asked her to send for his solicitor, and Mr. Porter, and another of their neighbours. His mind seemed clearer than it had been for weeks.

Marian did not understand the meaning of his request, but she was told afterwards that he had been re-making his will, and that he had appointed his two friends his executors. Marian's mother had left her the money she had in her own right, and now her father divided his wealth equally between his two children. Marian was to have the house and all that was in it; the solicitor, along with the executors, was to take an inventory of everything and see that nothing was disturbed. By this proviso Marian could see that her father was doubtful about what her brother's actions might be when he was gone. This suspicion was confirmed when she was told that she could do what she liked with her money; but her brother was only to have the interest of his share, and was not to be allowed in any case to touch the capital. If Marian died unmarried, Angelo was to have the money his father had willed to her; but she might bequeath to whom she pleased the money her mother had left her.

After the will was made and signed the sick man sank into a stupor, as if he had made a supreme effort and was thoroughly exhausted by it. He remained in this condition for two days. During the third night he passed peacefully away.

Angelo had not been home for months, but when he saw the announcement of his father's death in the morning paper

he thought that he had something to return for now.

It was late one morning when he entered the back-room of a so-called club. The parlour was reeking with the stench of cigar-ends and the slush of upset beer and spirit glasses. Two or three of his 'pals' had gathered there before him, and were having what they called a morning refresher.

'We'd a splendid haul last night,' one was saying as Angelo

entered.

'Hallo, Jones, old man!' they said as he went and sat down. 'You're a warrior, you are, and no mistake! We should never have got off scot free last night had it not been for you.'

'The strain and excitement took it out of me, though. Fill me a glass—strong. I want a reviver,' he answered as he took up a morning paper which was lying upon the upholstered leather seat. The glass was placed on the table at his elbow, and as he glanced down the columns of news he lifted the

glass to his lips and emptied it.

'Read the account of our escapade last night,' said one of the men. 'The coppers are most anxious to make our acquaintance. I should say that we are the most popular men in London this morning. I believe that we are even ahead of the Suffragists. The reporters are loud in our praises. They say that this is the smartest piece of crib-cracking that has been done for a long time.'

Angelo gave a whistle and suddenly raised his eyebrows.
'What's up?' asked one of the men, who was much older

than Angelo.

'Our old man has kicked the bucket,' he replied.

'Then you'll have a tidy sum on the job?' asked another.

'You shut up, McCarthy. You're always ready to grab the spoils, though it's precious little you'll do to get them,' replied

Angelo irritably.

'Look 'ere, you blokes, let's have no more of this,' interposed the older man sternly, and with an air of authority as if he were their leader. 'I suppose,' he went on, 'you will be going down to see your country house, Jones? If so, I don't mind accompanying you, just to keep up your spirits and to be your legal adviser.'

'All right, Grab; I shall be very pleased to have your company. I shall have to make myself as respectable as possible, so that I may be presentable. There may be a

chance of getting as much as will free me for a little, at any rate, from this chronic state of impecuniosity.'

'I hope so,' grunted the chief, 'and a good deal more. You ought to get a princely amount of swag out of this affair.'

'Well, you see, it all depends upon the will. If our old governor has got wind of my whereabouts, he'll most likely have cut me off with a shilling, to the advantage of my saintly sister.'

'Curse the saints! But you don't mean to tell me that you are so chicken-hearted as to allow a girl to diddle you out of a large fortune!'

'You can depend upon it that I shall have my share, either

by fair means or otherwise.'

The two men were soon on their way to Waterloo Station. When they arrived at Farnham they went to an hotel for lunch, after which the elder man saw that the younger one had sufficient intoxicants to prime him for his task. Angelo was making his way to the station to hire a vehicle to take him to his old home, when he saw their carriage standing outside a milliner's shop. He rightly guessed that Marian was inside, so he waited until she came out. When she appeared he abruptly asked her, without any sympathy or ceremony, if his father had made a will.

Marian burst into tears, for her worst fears were realized. She never thought that he could have sunk so low, or that he could have been so heartless and cruel. She thought that his father's death would have softened his hard heart, and have caused him to relent, but she saw that he was as callous as ever.

When she had recovered from the shock this revelation of his character had given her, she replied that this was not the time for such questions. He told her that he would stay at the hotel until the funeral, and after inquiring the day and the time as though it were a mere matter of business, he bade her

good afternoon, and went back to join his friend.

When Angelo told Grab that he had been saved the trouble of the journey to his home, his friend replied that he was a fool not to have insisted on getting the information he wanted. Angelo said that his sister's grief was so poignant that he could not press the point which apparently added to her sorrow. His friend replied that it was all cant, that she was making a snug fortune out of it, and that it paid her to keep Angelo in the dark. He went on to say that it was

away for months. The entered with his cap in m
'Oh, Angelo!' exclaimed Marian, with a frig
'I scarcely recognized you. Where are your
have you had your hair cut so short?'

'I've been playing football,' he answered carel He was now an adept at excuses and falsehood

'I am so sorry,' said his sister.

But her fears increased when she looked i Though the light, coming through the drawn bli dim, she could see how changed he was. Althnot accustomed to the ways of the world, and trained eyes of some for seeing evidence of vicdoing, she guessed at once the life he was leading

'I want to know if my father has made a firmly, though his voice was somewhat thick.

'Angelo, I am sorry that you are so persi point, so unsympathetic and mercenary,' she repl

'You know, Marie, that sympathy was never virtues. I have a good many, but I cannot lay one: I never could'

one; I never could.

Oh, Angelo, I do wish you would leave your panions and settle down at home. My life is s that both father and mother are gone. I ha father passed away as though I had no one Although my friends have been very kind and yet they cannot fill the place of father and moth try to reform, Angelo? Will you leave off evil w

heart was softening a little, that good and evil were striving for

the mastery, and this encouraged her to go on:

'Angelo, I am sure we shall be happy together. You would be away from your old companions and their associations. You could easily turn over a new leaf. I appeal to you for the sake of our father and mother, who would both like to meet us in heaven. I appeal to you for my sake and your own, and for the sake of Christ, who died to redeem us, to think of the life you are living, and where it eventually leads to. Will you forsake sin and—and—try to settle down to an honourable, upright Christian life?'

She could go on no further, her sobs were choking her. She bowed her head and buried her face in her handkerchief. There was silence for some time, broken only by Marian's sobs. Angelo had never been nearer repentance in all his life. But what would his 'pals' say of him if he deserted them? How could he lead a sanctimonious life? He thought of his friend waiting in Farnham. If Marian would let him go and come when he liked it would be all right; but he knew that she would question and plead and make his life miserable so long as he kept in touch with his present associates. The voice of the tempter pointed out to him the sacrifices he would have to make, and the dull, uninteresting life he would have to lead.

Angelo at last broke the silence in a hard voice as he said coarsely:

'Marian, can you give me a ten-pound note? I'm clean broke.'

'Oh, Angelo, how can you?' she asked appealingly, almost staggered by his question. 'Have I pleaded with you in vain? Oh, how I have prayed that you might listen and give heed. Have you sunk so low? Is your heart so hardened, your conscience already so seared, that you can resist appeals to a better life even in the presence of death?'

'Now, I've had enough of this,' he answered roughly—'quite enough. I'm not going to be preached at by you. I've had enough of this before. Are you, or are you not, going to

give me some money?'

'I cannot, Angelo—I really cannot unless you tell me how you are going to spend it. I will not help you to perdition.'

'Tell you how I am going to spend it?' he sneered. 'That's rich, at any rate. A chick like you wanting to know how I spend my money! Am I a baby, or some kind of incapable imbecile?

Angelo rose and left the house, slamming the

The day of the funeral arrived, and Marian's f to rest by the side of her mother in the quiet littl When the will was read after the funeral, it was all present that Angelo was not at all pleased wit the executors told Marian that he noticed the w he had given her from time to time.

'There was one point in the will that I did no am sure that Angelo noticed it too,' he said.

'Which was that?'

'Where it stated that in the case of your dea have your share at once, not the interest, as a share. Thus he would have half the money interest on the other half.'

Marian shuddered as if she saw some evil poss. After the will had been read and the men had cursed, and raged, and threatened to burn do place. The servants were terrified, and talked once, as they did not feel safe. At last Angelo 1 and coat and left the house. He had received pounds, which was due to him, from one of the 6

Mr. Porter and his friend were anxious to k character of Angelo so that they might be better out the wishes of the departed. They spent weeks in getting at the true facts of his history. that when he went to the University he soon go

to gaol. After this, they seemed to think that they had nothing to lose, and went deeper into crime. They were soon made marked men by the authorities at Scotland Yard, who told the executors that the gang was causing them no end of trouble, for its members were shrewd and clever, and it was difficult to lay hold of them. Kepworth, or Iones, or Williams, they said, was the cleverest of the lot; at least, they never had the chance to get hold of him for any of the larger robberies which were committed. They had caught him two or three times, but this was for brawling and fighting. He had served a sentence of six months during the summer for this offence. As soon as he was liberated a most daring robbery had been committed, which they believed had been the work of Kepworth and his confederates. Probably Kepworth had planned it while in prison. He had a mathematical mind, and, not being supplied with a chess-board while in prison, he had no doubt played at this instead. At any rate, it was well planned and skilfully executed.

'But why did you not lock him up again?' asked one of the

executors innocently.

'Not sufficient evidence,' answered the detective, with a

knowing smile.

The executors agreed not to tell Marian all the facts which they had gleaned, so as to spare her feelings as much as they could. But they made her aware of her danger. They saw that the house was properly protected at night, and got two

more dogs, the most ferocious they could find.

About five weeks after the funeral Angelo came home on a Saturday night about nine o'clock with a number of his rowdy companions. He said they had come to spend a week-end with her for old acquaintance' sake. One of the servants ran off unknown to Marian or anyone else and told the executors. They were soon at the house, and gave Marian a pleasant surprise, for she had scarcely known what to do under the circumstances.

The two men spoke plainly to the intruders.

'I shall do what I like in my own house,' said Angelo, with an oath.

'This is not your house,' answered one of the men, 'and, what is more, we are masters here until your sister is twenty-five years of age; and if you and your companions do not take yourselves off at once, I shall telephone to Farnham and have the police on the spot as soon as possible. If you had come

an intoxicated condition, and insisted on Marithe half that their father had left to her. She cohe said, on the interest of his half, which he woher. Marian pointed out to him that this was it was not in her power to do anything. He can the executors. He replied that she could get the wished if she would only try. She began thim and to appeal as she had done before, but the infuriate him more than ever. At last she said:

'I tell you once for all, I cannot give it to you

'Then I say you can.'

'If I could and did, it would only hasten you am not going to do that.'

'I tell you, I am heavily in debt.'

'And you would soon be in the same position present debts were paid.'

'Do you defy me?' he hissed.

'I refuse to give you money to enable yo physical and moral suicide.'

You do?

'I do most certainly.'

'Then look out,' he said, his eyes glaring li wild beast. 'If it cannot be had in life, it shal by death.'

Shaking his clenched fist, he left the room, a him slam the hall door as he went out. She we thought so much of this threat if her attention

returned. She took her old nurse, who was now housekeeper, into her confidence, and told her all except where she was going, which, indeed, she did not know herself; but she remembered her father's dying prayer, and felt sure it would be answered. She did not know where her relatives were, nor even if she had any. She sat down to lunch, but she had no appetite. She was too full of sorrow and anxiety to eat. She had been waiting for some little time when old David brought round the horse and carriage. She bade adieu to her old nurse and her dear old home, and then drove off, perhaps, she thought, never to return.

The old coachman, who had been with them for many years, wondered where his young mistress was going. She was

wondering the same thing.

'I must not go through London,' she said. 'If I were to go westward, I should run the least risk. I will take train to Andover. Yes, there will be one in about ten minutes, and I shall just be in time for it.'

She had forgotten that Angelo might not have gone straight to London when he left her on the previous evening, so she

was not prepared for the fright she got at the station.

Just as they drove up to the level-crossing at the station the gates were closed for the London train to pass. Marian was sitting with her face towards the horse, and as the train steamed out she watched each coach as it went by, when, to her surprise, she saw Angelo sitting in a corner reading a news-

paper. Fortunately he never raised his eyes.

When Marian got out of the carriage she was trembling like a leaf. She scarcely knew what she was doing as she hailed a porter, and sent old David back home. The porter put her into a rather dingy, uncomfortable third-class compartment she had made up her mind to travel third, for she did not know how long she would have to make her money last. She often said afterwards how she welcomed that dingy asylum and thanked God for her wonderful escape. As it happened she was alone, for there were not many people travelling at this time of the year. She prayed earnestly and long for Divine help and guidance. Then she began to wonder what she would do when she arrived at Andover. A thought entered her mind that she would take the first train out, wherever it was going. This became such a mastering impulse that she decided she would follow it. She was at present travelling in the opposite direction to her persecutor, and this gave her a · what is the time of the next train, please r

The porter looked at her wonderingly, but the slender figure clothed in black, and the sachis questioner, softened his heart, and he an thetically:

'There is a train due in fifteen minutes fo miss.'

She went to the buffet and had a cup of hot bread-and-butter, which she ate hurriedly, the booking-office and got her ticket. She was ! northward, and began to ask herself where Cl and how long she would be on the way. She i it was not the distance that made the journey slowness of the train. When she arrived she platform for some moments, thinking what step She decided she would stay the night here, s portmanteaux in the parcel-office, and, taking l hand, went out into the almost deserted stree not afford hotel bills, she thought, so she began for a cheaper place. She wanted her little stock last until she could paint and sell some pictu thoughts were running through her mind she ca red lamp with the words 'Temperance Hotel.' and was shown into a room where two old ladi close to the fire. They made room for her a entered. She would have a cup of tea, she said the maid's inquiry. Yes, she would stay the ni perfectly familiar with all the facts. The one to whom the narrator was talking was deaf, and so many of them had to be repeated two or three times over.

In a little over an hour the old ladies went off to bed.

Marian soon followed their example. She knew not why, but all her fears had now left her. She ceased to wonder where she was going, for she had fully made up her mind that the place the old lady had described would suit her in every respect. She would have ample opportunities for her work. She would be far away and hidden from her persecutors.

She slept better that night, though in a strange bed, than she had done for months. A strange feeling of peace and security had come over her which she had not felt since her

father died.

The next morning she left Cheltenham for Hay, with what

results the reader already knows.

When the executors received Marian's note they were not altogether disappointed. They thought that she would send her address on to them. They felt that she was much safer away from home for a time. They were delighted to find that she had given them full liberty to act. For her sake and for the sake of her father and mother, they would see that right was done. Her brother should neither rob her, nor injure her property, if they could help it. But as months went by and nothing was heard of Marian, they became anxious. From time to time they had a visit from Angelo, but he got no more than was due to him. He said they had hidden Marian away from him, and that he would find her and have his own. He would never submit quietly to be robbed, as he was being robbed, by a parcel of saints.

CHAPTER XXI

MARIAN MISSING

ABOUT the middle of October Mrs. Moorhou letter from Mr. Bowen to the effect that he had be so many extra Harvest Thanksgiving sermons the need of a few days' rest, and would be down on Monday afternoon.

'He will be very often feeling that he needs

said Mr. Moorhouse.

'Well, John, you know he works very hard, an he will work all the better for a few days here, no

'I am glad he is coming down, for I want to ta him the matter of Angelo and the possibility of Ma danger. He has had experience of such character them well.'

'But you surely do not think Angelo will find do her harm?' asked his wife, somewhat alarmed.

- 'I really cannot tell, but I've had an uneasy fe When I went into Surrey to tell the executors wh in order to put their minds at rest, they told me, a that Angelo had sworn to be the death of her.'
- 'Do you think he would really do Marian any he 'I can hardly say. I am doubtful. Mr. Po does not think he will stop at anything to gain he answered all anything to gain he anything to gain

prove providential. I suppose you have not written to him expressing your doubts and fears?'

No.

'Then remember God's guiding hand in the past. Remember how we were brought here to help and protect our niece. Remember the doubts and misgivings we had, and the strength of the impulse which caused us to settle in this particular spot. Take courage, John, and, as I said before, let us watch and pray.'

'We are going to have a wet week-end,' he said, as he rose and went to the window. 'The rain is coming down in torrents. I hope it will not prevent Bowen from coming on

Monday.'

'I don't think it will. I will write him to say we want him to come, as we have matters of the greatest importance troubling us. This will bring him through flood or fire.'

'You seem to think he is very devoted to us.'

'I don't think so; I know it. He will do his utmost to help

us, or anyone who is in trouble, for that matter.'

'We may be causing ourselves needless anxiety,' he answered, as he stood before the window, with his hands in his pockets rattling his keys.

But as he began to pace to and fro from one end of the room to the other, his wife could see that her husband was more

upset than she had seen him for a long time.

He asked dreamily:

'Where is Marian?'

'She has gone down to see Mrs. Morgan's little girl, who is so very ill.'

The weather during the summer had been, upon the whole, gloriously fine, and a splendid harvest had been gathered, but it seemed that winter was going to set in early. Black, heavy clouds hung low in the sky, scarcely any of the Black Mountains were visible, and the rain came down cold and pitiless.

When Mr. Bowen arrived on Monday afternoon he found Mr. Moorhouse and Dick waiting for him on the platform.

'I have been thinking that it is well you made the weir so strong,' said Mr. Bowen, as he looked towards the river. 'I never thought to see a current of such strength as this. Your forethought is ahead of mine. I had an idea in August that you had put in too much material.'

'Nothing like preparing for a rainy day,' answered Mr.

Moorhouse. 'Have you had much rain up north?'

after lunch, dinner at six, and then another three

'Then there has to be no spooning during th

' Not a bit of it.'

'Are visitors bound by these rules?'

'You had better ask one of the legislators,' he nodded towards Dick.

'We'll give you a four days' exemption, seeing been working so hard lately,' said Dick.

'Dinner has been arranged for five o'clock,' s house, as they were driving up. 'We thought doubt be anxious to get up to the Manor. R come down in this rain.'

'No; I did not expect her. It is very kind o these arrangements to suit my convenience. I t will cease. It is not so bad as it has been.'

After dinner Mr. Bowen put on a pair of leggi to Mr. Moorhouse, and his waterproof. Dick wa pared for the weather. When they got outside almost ceased, though there was a heavy, clammy

Ruth gave Mr. Bowen a warm welcome. The close to the drawing-room fire, and spent a pleas chatting over current events. Then Dick left the his den to continue his work. Mr. Bowen was have Ruth all to himself, for there were many thir to talk over with her; and they spent a very pleatogether, undisturbed by anyone.

Then talkad

'No,' they both answered together.

'Then, what's happened?' he exclaimed. 'Where's Dick?'

'He's in his den—he's been there all the evening,' answered Ruth.

'Dick!' he called; 'Dick!'

Ruth and Mr. Bowen looked first at Mr. Moorhouse and then at each other, wondering what had happened.

Dick came rushing out of his room, for he knew the voice, and his fears rose with such force that they made him stagger.

Dick, have you been out this evening? questioned Mr.

Moorhouse.

'I have, Uncle. I was deep in my work when one of the maids came and said that a gentleman wanted to see me at the Llydyadyway turning on important business. I felt more than half inclined to refuse, but I was curious to know what the man wanted, so I slipped on my boots and waterproof and went. To my surprise I found no one there, and, though I waited for half an hour, no one turned up. So I came away more curious still; but as I wanted to pen a few paragraphs that I had in my mind, I came straight back to my work, and was just finishing when you rang so vigorously. I was about to come into the drawing-room to tell them of my strange adventure. What has happened? Is Marian safe?' he said, in alarm.

Mr. Moorhouse explained that he had been to take the chair at a committee meeting connected with a little scheme they had on foot for a new reading-room for the young men of the town. A little while after he left home a gentleman called, and assumed to be the doctor, though the maid said his voice did not sound like the doctor's. He said that Mrs. Morgan wanted to see Marian at once. Her little girl was much worse—in fact, dying; she had asked so often for Marian that at last the mother had consented to send for her. She was sorry to trouble her on such a night, but she thought Marian would like to see her before she passed away. The 'doctor' would not stay, as he had another important case; but he had hurried up to oblige Mrs. Morgan.

'I left the meeting,' went on Mr. Moorhouse, 'when the more important business was over, for I felt uneasy. When I arrived home my wife told me the story that I have just related to you. I did not take off my coat, but went straight to the cottage where Mrs. Morgan lives. She said that she had

sent for Marian. The little girl was decidedly better, and eaten nearly all the jelly Marian had taken her in the pon, and she had slept all the evening. I then came on a quickly as I could.

Bowen, who had been listening attentively to the story, to Ruth, and asked if he might ring for the maid who

ld Dick that he was wanted?

ertainly,' she replied. It was clear that she was beginning sp the facts of the case. Her face was pale as death, yet as steady, cool, and collected.

ould you mind leaving the maid to me?' said Mr. Bowen.

ot at all,' she answered.

en the servant appeared he asked:

man came to the kitchen-door this evening and asked for lewellyn, did he not?'

es, sir.

d you know the man?'

o, sir.'

suppose you know most of the young men in the town eighbourhood?'

e maid blushed as she answered:

do know most of them.'

ou are a native of this place. Iane?' he questioned kindly,

They all listened intently to what Mr. Moorhouse had to say. Dick was feeling the situation keenly, and before the story was finished he could not sit still.

When Mr. Moorhouse had given him the information he

required, Mr. Bowen said:

Now, Dick, I want you to sit still and keep cool for the present, until we get at something like a solution of this mystery. I can see clearly through the game as far as Marian is concerned.

'Do you think she is murdered?' asked Dick.

'Do you think that Dick was enticed out by some one

who is responsible for her disappearance?' asked Ruth.

'One at a time, please. This evening's business is complicated and mysterious, and if we lose our heads over it there will be more trouble and pain than there need be. Perhaps you may have a suspicion that I do not care about the fate of Marian because I talk in this way, but God only knows how deeply I do feel it! She has been as a sister to me ever since I first had the honour of meeting her. I will keep down my feelings, because I believe I can serve her and you better by doing so. This is a case of mind to mind, plot to plot, diamond cut diamond. You asked if I think that Marian is murdered. I should scarcely think so. Abducted she may have been, but I do not think that their villainy is so great as to cause them to murder her in cold blood. There will probably be developments to-morrow which will surprise you, if my calculations are correct. Do they mean harm to Dick? If not, why should he be sent for? Why should he see no one when he goes to the place where important business was going to be transacted? If he be blamed for the disappearance of Marian, how can he prove an alibi? Where was he at the time Marian left home? Where was Marian? Did they meet? Did they quarrel? What really happened?

Dick looked bewildered. No one spoke for some time. Each of them was trying to get some idea of the motives and purposes of the perpetrators of this foul deed. Mr. Bowen

broke the silence by asking:

' Have you an oil stove, Ruth?'

'Yes; but why do you ask?'
'Have you a camp-bed?'

'Yes.'

'Make Dick as comfortable as you can to-night in the secret dungeon.'

ever!' exclaimed Dick. 'I cannot submit to incarceration I might be helping to find Marian.'

hink you will help best by taking my advice.'

rhaps Alf is right,' said Mr. Moorhouse, somewhat igly. 'We do not know how this wicked business may out, or whom it may involve; but that they are striking too, I can see as clearly as possible.'

here will be no harm done, in any case,' replied Mr. n, 'even if it be unnecessary; but it is well to take every ition, knowing, as we do, something of the character of en we are fighting. I cannot at present see why they for you, unless it is that they are making you the Will you take my advice, Dick?' he asked goat. thetically.

will,' answered Dick.

y wife will be anxiously waiting our return,' said Mr. house. 'Had we not better be going?'

Bowen turned to Ruth and kissed her, saying:

ood-bye, my darling; cheer up. Don't be down-hearted. ill fathom this mystery yet. Good-bye, Dick. Play the and keep cool.'

CHAPTER XXII

A FRUITLESS SEARCH

WHEN Mr. Moorhouse and Mr. Bowen had left, Dick rushed into his den, where he sat a long time in deep thought and anguish of mind. He could not see through this affair at all. At last he opened his door and went to look for his sister. He found her sitting still before the fireless grate, lost in thought. He could see her eyes were red with weeping.

'Oh, Dick, is that you?' she said, with a startled expression.

'Well, dear, have you found a solution to this mystery?'

'I am afraid I have not,' he replied. 'Oh, Ruth, I feel like rushing out and looking everywhere for Marian. My heart will break if she has been murdered. Do you think that God has really forsaken us?'

'I do not, Dick. He will hear our prayers. I have been asking Him, oh, so earnestly, to keep Marian from harm, and

to prevent the villains from taking her life.'

'Do you feel that she is safe? I mean—I mean—well—that they have not killed her?'

'I am confident on that point, Dick; and, what is more, I

am full of hope that we shall meet Marian again.'

'What do you think of Alf's suggestion-or command,

rather-about the secret dungeon?'

'I have been thinking about it,' she answered, 'and perhaps he is right. There is evidently some purpose in getting you entangled. I think they have found out that Marian and you were engaged, and to throw the authorities off the scent with regard to themselves they are trying to put the blame upon you.'

'That is the only reason I can give for their action.'

'It is now two o'clock. Shall we quietly try and get the dungeon ready and put a few necessary things in. If we are

I think we may do it without disturbing the servants. all neither of us sleep if we go to bed, so we might as what needs to be done as soon as possible.'

h went noiselessly into the kitchen, for the maids slept rooms above, and fetched brooms and brushes, while vent to his room for an old overcoat and cap. He swept ssage and the cellar, while Ruth was getting the necesticles of furniture. By five o'clock they had got every ready.

strikes me that I shall not want much food, alone in this nusty place, haunted by the thought of Marian, dead or

nful exile,' said Dick.

y to look on the bright side, Dick.' ave been trying, and I can't find one for the life of me.' u mark my words, God will cause all these things to out for our good. But I must be going, or the servants getting up. I will, if possible, let you have your meals usual time, and leave them just inside the door. Three s will be the signal.'

Il you bring down my writing materials?'

. s. '

h told the housemaid that something had happened to n, though they did not know what. That was the reason to his guilt. In fact, they have, in a sense, given themselves away by sending for him as they did; of course, there was probably no other way of doing it to make sure of his whereabouts. But, presuming that there are other evidences tomorrow which point to his guilt, he would at once be apprehended. His wild days will not have been forgotten yet, but will be resurrected with many embellishments. He could not prove that he was at home all the evening—in fact, the servants knew that he was out. He might say that he was sent for by a stranger, but saw no one; yet an outsider might assume that this might have been an accomplice of his in the crime committed. In any case, I do not see how he could clear himself. If there be no further devilry in this plot, then he can come forth into the light of day and account for his absence by ignorance or indisposition. There is a possibility that they might only have sent for him to make sure that he was out of the way, so that there was no chance of his interference, which might have proved very inconvenient to the execution of their plot.'

'Ah, that is the most likely theory,' answered Mr. Moorhouse.

'I think so, too,' answered his wife. 'That is the most likely explanation of this part of the mystery. I wonder we did not see it before.'

Mr. Bowen looked doubtful, but only suggested that they should retire to bed and try to snatch a few hours of sleep in order that they might prepare for the work of the morrow.

When he got to his room he had no intention of sleeping; he wanted to think and pray. He went over and over again the pros and cons of the situation. He dismissed theory after theory as unfeasible, until at last he got one with which he was satisfied.

'If my deductions are correct,' he soliloquized, 'I may be able to track them and upset their little games.'

He dozed off to sleep at last, but only to dream of floods, masked murderers, and secret, foul-smelling dungeons.

The following morning dawned cold and miserable. The fog still hung over the landscape, and the trees were dripping, but the rain had ceased. Mr. Moorhouse and Mr. Bowen had a cup of hot cocoa and started out on their sad mission. They went into the town and began to make inquiries. To their great surprise they found that the news had preceded them, and was flying like wild-fire from house to house and from shop to shop.

other proof of the truth of the old saying, "Ill news ast," said Mr. Bowen.

y asked a tradesman, who was just beginning to pull his shutters, if he had heard anything of Miss Turner.

have just heard that she was seen last night about eight

going over the bridge with the young squire.'

Moorhouse looked at Mr. Bowen, who nodded signifiwhile the man was turning to get hold of another

ould you mind telling us who gave you this information?'

vas told by the postman.'

will not have time or inclination to read all the postthis morning, seeing that he has got a thrilling piece of like this.'

re enough, sir, it's true, for he said the man at the had confirmed it. Mr. Parchment was there making es when he took a letter, and he heard the man tell him ut it.'

the mention of this name Mr. Moorhouse bit his lip, th a look of mingled fear and rage, asked:

Parchment about so early generally?'

passed through the gate last night, for he had heard a rumour that they had been quarrelling, and I told him what I have told you. I could almost swear to them.'

'But supposing we tell you that Mr. Llewellyn was with us

last night?

'Well, I should say, as I've already told you, sir, that they were like them, an' there is no other "Mad Dick" in this neighbourhood as I knows of.'

The two men turned away, and Mr. Moorhouse asked:

'What had we better do? My mind is bewildered.'

'I suggest that we get a search-party together and try to get to the bottom of this wicked plot. Then we can try to find a solution of it.'

They soon had a party together, for everybody was ready to help Mr. Moorhouse, and the men were delighted to see Mr. Bowen again, but sorry to meet him on such an errand.

The party divided, one half going down the north side of the river, the other half down the south side. The frothy, surging current was level with the banks on each side, and it was not safe to take out any of the boats, as had been suggested by one of the party.

When the constables awoke they found the town in a state of great excitement. Never before had they seen anything like it. They rubbed their eyes and began to ask what had happened. They were told that an awful tragedy had been committed. They ridiculed the matter at first, but after pinching themselves two or three times to make sure that they were not dreaming, they inquired if it were a case of sheep-stealing?

'Indeed-to-goodness, it's far worse than that,' answered a boy. '" Mad Dick" has killed Mr. Moorhouse's niece, and

jumped into the river himself to save his neck.'

The constables went off pell-mell, the sergeant after one party, the private after the other. The searchers were looking carefully among the bushes, and just as the sergeant arrived there was a wild cry which almost made the blood of those two who were most interested run cold. It turned out that it was not the body of a woman or a man, but of a sheep that had been brought down, as they often were, by the flood.

They had got nearly half a mile down the river-side when

one of the men shouted:

'There's a dress!'

When the rest of the party came up they saw that this was

alse alarm, as they had hoped, for there, hanging on the of a tree now partly submerged, was the skirt of a woman. Mr. Moorhouse saw it, his big frame shook with emotion. ould, no doubt, have broken down entirely had not Mr. gone to his side and whispered:

n't fear; this is only what I had suspected. It is

r trick of the plotters.'

Mr. Moorhouse could not take this view, and he began as only men do when overwhelmed with some great

y cut a stick from one of the trees, and the lightest man company stepped on to the strong part of the bough, last managed, with some difficulty, to pull the skirt s him. The sergeant at once took possession of it. this the skirt of your niece, sir?' ooks like it,' Mr. Moorhouse managed to say.

here's the pocket!' said the sergeant. 'Now we may to make sure. Hallo, here's a note!' he exclaimed. I you read it out?' asked one of the men.

read as follows:

AR MARIAN,

'I think that we had better have this matter out away

Mr. Moorhouse went off to see one of the magistrates. Mr. Bowen said he would like to have the rest of the day to himself. The other men continued their painful search.

Mr. Bowen wanted to follow out the plan he had decided on during the previous night. He had made a careful note of certain footmarks near where the skirt was found before the party had gathered round. What he had seen had confirmed his suspicions, and he wanted to find now the other links in the chain. He went down the road below the lodge-gates opposite the park belonging to Moor House. He found the track of a motor-car, which he followed carefully. About a hundred yards below the lodge he saw that the car had been standing by the side of the road with two side wheels in the gutter. He noted all the footmarks round it. He then asked himself the question in what direction the car was travelling. He examined the imprint of the tyres to and from the gutter. He found the impression much stronger in the direction of the town, so he decided that the car had started that way. went into the town as quickly as he could, and made inquiries at a public-house named the Ship, where the street was so narrow that they would be likely to know what passed. He was told that a car did pass up the street. The horn had sounded just opposite, and the men began discussing the dangers of motoring on such a night. They said that the time would be about eight o'clock.

Mr. Bowen telephoned to Moor House asking for a trap to be sent down at once, with some of the best horse-flesh they had got. In about ten minutes the groom drove up. Mr.

Bowen jumped in, saving:

'Drive on up the Brecon Road.'

When they had travelled about half a mile they came to the junction of two roads.

'Pull up, please,' he said to the groom.

After dismounting, and examining the road carefully, he got up again, saying:

' Drive on.

CHAPTER XXIII

MR. BOWEN AS DETECTIVE

owen and the groom drove on this time for about three the former keeping his eyes on the road. When they assed through Glasbury he found that the track of the s no longer visible on the Brecon Road, and they turned a spot where they had noticed a road leading over the

, here we are again! exclaimed Mr. Bowen. The groom puzzled, but asked no questions, and Mr. Bowen did em at all in a communicative mood. He examined the sions and footmarks at this point very carefully, with a devergession upon his face. After some time he mounted

'There are few who would risk their necks in a motor-car in a fog such as we had last night, sir.'

'Had you any strangers who called on foot?'

'Only a lady and a gentleman. They called to have a drink to keep the cold out. They said they had come to stay with the Squire for a few days; but I have not seen them today.'

Were they both rather tall?

'Yes, sir.'

'Thank you. Could you supply us with a cup of hot tea or coffee and a sandwich?'

'Yes, sir; but tea or coffee is not the best thing to take for

keeping the cold out.'

'That's a matter of opinion, my good man. The groom is looking after the horse, and will be in shortly. Will you have

it ready as soon as possible? I am in a great hurry.

The man stared at him again as he had done when Mr. Bowen asked him the first question. He seemed astounded that anybody could be so foolish as to risk his life by hurrying. He slouched into the kitchen, and in about ten minutes a maid appeared with a tray.

They followed the trail again for about four miles to the junction of the Hereford main road. Mr. Bowen could see plainly now that the car had gone in the direction of Hereford, and might be in London or Edinburgh by this time. He stood here a few minutes, not knowing what to do. He was perplexed and baffled.

'I'll make some inquiries at the toll-house at the bridge,' he

said, more to himself than to the groom.

He found that a motor-car had passed through the gate on the previous evening in the direction of Hay, but had not returned. Mr. Bowen then directed the groom to drive homewards again. When they got to the place opposite the park where the motor-car had been standing he asked him to pull up. To the surprise of the groom, the young clergyman vaulted over the park wall and made straight for the drive. When he arrived there he stooped down as he had done before on several occasions during the day. In a few minutes the groom saw him coming rapidly towards him. Mr. Bowen vaulted over the wall, and, getting into the trap, said:

'Drive to Cusop Manor.

When they got near the churchyard in the lane along which Dick had travelled the previous evening in answer to the

e summons he had received, Mr. Bowen said to the 1:

ill you drive on to the gate of the Manor and wait for

e groom let the horse walk gently on towards the old , and ten minutes elapsed before he saw anything more . Bowen. When he did see him he watched him with shment. Mr. Bowen had come round the bend in the n a stooping posture, and was now moving towards the en door. Before long he reappeared, saying they would rive home, as he thought they had done enough for one It was now nearly dark, and, although the fog had lifted,

ind was still damp and cold.

en Mr. Bowen arrived at Moor House he went straight to his room and changed his clothes. The trio in the ng-room had seen him pass the window with his eyes on the ground as if lost in thought, and they expected ould go in to them at once. Their fears rose when he ot do so. To satisfy the ladies, Mr. Moorhouse went to ain the cause of delay, and when he returned and said Bowen had only gone up to take off his wet clothes, they d a sigh of relief. Their nerves were so much upset that ightest irregularity caused alarm. Mrs. Moorhouse rang

Moorhouse sadly, 'except that they are scouring the country in search of Dick, and sending off descriptions by telegraph

and telephone.'

'And' "tell-a-woman," added Mr. Bowen, with a smile. He went on: 'It's well these constables have a little to do sometimes. I really think they don't get enough exercise; only. I'm sorry when they do get any it means trouble for some one. I was highly amused this morning at their enthusiasm and the "bull-butt" way in which they went to work. Did you see your friend the magistrate?'

'Yes; I told him of our confidence in Dick, and our firm belief in his innocence After I had related to him all the circumstances as we know them, he fully shared our opinions and belief. I told him that you had pointed out to Dick the probability of his being suspected, and that you had advised

him to cut, and he had done so.'

'What did he say?'

'He shrugged his shoulders and answered, "I'm a magistrate!"

'As much as to say he'd have done the same, eh?'

'Yes; but he added that the circumstantial evidence was very strong against Dick, and if he were found they would be bound to lock him up.'

'We've saved them that trouble! We have a cell as well as

His Majesty, and we'll be responsible for his safety.'

'I suppose they are all clinging to the river theory?'

' Most tenaciously. Don't you?'

'No.'

'Why?'

'Because I think that I can prove it false.'

'You can!' exclaimed Mrs. Moorhouse. Turning to her husband, she said: 'I told you Alf would bring us hope, John.

Now, Alf, tell us what you have found.'

'I am afraid that I have not found much, although I have got enough evidence to satisfy me that the river tragedy is all a hoax. I think I had better start at the beginning with my theory. When I got to bed last night it is needless to say that I could not sleep. I calmed my thoughts as much as I could. I know that Auntie will forgive me if I make a confession. I don't remember ever doing it before, but I got up, put on my dressing-gown, lit my pipe, and paced to and fro until I had got the probable facts of the plot in consecutive order. I felt sure that Marian had been abducted, but the question was,

I reasoned from the known to the probable. The first we got this morning confirmed my suspicions. You will mber that I was not many paces behind the man that first he skirt? You know that round this spot there was a piece uddy ground about six or eight feet long by two wide? remember now, but I had not noticed it particularly. robably you noticed me rush in front of the man? did; but I thought you were only anxious to see the

Not I. As I told you at the time, that was only what I exed. What I wanted to see were the footmarks. I did see and stood so as to prevent the man from obliterating them.' Oh!' exclaimed Mrs. Moorhouse.

never saw them,' answered her husband.

robably not,' answered Mr. Bowen. 'Now I want to ou a question. Do many of the men, if any, in the town highbourhood wear rubber-heels?'

have never seen any. You know that they have only

itly been adopted in the cities.'

ust so. You are quite sure that Dick does not wear?' he asked, with a facetious expression upon his face.

Quite sure,' answered Mr. Moorhouse; 'but, you're joking.'
was never more serious in my life. I can assure you.

waited for me, at the toll-gate. I then told you that I was going to have the day on my own.'

'Yes.'

'I went down past the lodge about a hundred yards, and found that a motor-car had been run to the side of the road, with the two side-wheels in the gutter, and here were the rubber-heel marks again. I examined the impressions carefully, and, after doing so, I felt convinced that they had lifted Marian bodily over the wall and placed her in the car while standing on the grass by the side of the road. I then tried to ascertain in which direction the car had come. In the direction of Hereford the impression was light, in the direction of Brecon heavy, showing that the car had glided into the gutter and afterwards started in the direction of Brecon. I went into the town, and found that a car had passed through the previous evening. I telephoned up here for a horse and trap, and have been tracking the car all day. One link in the chain I cannot understand, and this is the only point that I have not been able to elucidate. When I got to Glasbury, I was going along the Brecon road past the station, but I had not seen the car trail for some time, so I turned back to where a road branches off across the river to the main portion of the village. Here I got the trail again, and saw that the car had been standing, and there were the rubber-heel marks again. Perhaps something went wrong with the mechanism of the car. I don't know, but I would give a trifle, poor as I am, to be able to get to know why they all got out here and did a little walking about.'

'Perhaps to get their feet warm,' suggested Mr. Moorhouse.

'I don't think so. There must have been some reason for it,' he went on, his brows contracting, as if he were trying to solve a difficult problem. 'We crossed the bridge, and found that they had doubled back down the other side of the river. We followed the trail again as far as Clyro. You remember what the man at the bridge said about the couple going through and quarrelling, and what I have told you about the rubber-heel marks?'

'Yes.'

'At Clyro the car stopped and backed under some trees. There were the heel-marks again of two persons coming up and stepping into it. I went into a public-house and asked if a car had passed there the previous evening. I could see the man thought I was mad. I asked him if any strangers had

 He said a lady and gentleman, who told him that they staying with the Squire, had called to have a drink. It surd to think that people staying with the Squire would out after dinner on such a night to have a drink.'

erhaps the Squire is a teetotaler.' erhaps he is. I hope so. What I think is this: there have been at least four of them. They must have been e neighbourhood for some time to get a knowledge of conditions and geography. They come from Hereford in car, and draw up under the trees at the spot I have ated. One calls upon Dick, then rushes off to Moor e and calls upon Marian, rushes off again, and gives the to the others. Two of them rush up the park towards rive, while the fourth stays behind to look after the car. waylay Marian on what she believes to be an errand of y half-way down the drive, seize and gag her, and take her the wall, where the car is standing. Here they strip off her put goggles on her eyes, a thick motor-veil over her face, the disguise is complete, and would never be suspected. the easiest matter in the world in these days of motoro abduct a person. Two of them take charge of the car Marian, while two walk up towards the bridge and play ôle of Dick and Marian. When they have successfully 'In the first place, they had not the knowledge of Angelo or of what took place last night.'

'They have now, at any rate; but they cling to the drowning

theory, and nothing will shake them off.'

'That's what I was going to say. They will not be shaken off. These men, as a rule, are not very quick-witted. They have physical strength in abundance, but not much mental acumen.'

'But what is your idea about the note? It is Dick's

writing to a "T."

'One word—PARCHMENT. I don't know how he has got into league with these men, but I am confident that he is in the swim.'

'Oh, Mr. Bowen, you have proved a real blessing to us,' said Mrs. Moorhouse.

Ruth came quietly out from the shadow of some heavy damask curtains, and almost before he knew of her presence she had kissed him.

'Well, this is a pleasant surprise,' he said, with beaming face. 'I wondered where you had gone to. I made inquiries for you when I was up at the Manor, and when they told me you were out, I thought I should find you here, but these quizzers have prevented me from inquiring about you.'

'I don't know how to thank you, Alf,' she said, as if she had not heard the words he had just uttered. 'You have saved Dick from being taken to prison, and now you have cleared him

from all suspicion. He will be free once more.'

'I'm not quite so sanguine as you, dear. I am afraid that the magistrates, like the constables, will still cling to the drowning theory. There is just a chance, of course, that I may be able to convince them. If so, all the better, only I should not like the idea of his reappearance while Parchment is free. I do not think I should advise him to come out of hiding even if the magistrates would allow bail, which I think they would do. I should be always afraid that Parchment would be hatching more mischief.'

'Have you any idea where they have taken Marian?' asked

Mrs. Moorhouse.

'Not in the least, Auntie. I have a suspicion that she is near, yet she may be far away. I admit I am baffled.'

'What makes you think she may be near?'

'Because the farther they take her the more risks they will run. Then I cannot explain the footmarks at the turning-

in Glasbury,' he replied, his brow contracting again as if ought that the whole solution lay at this point.

th said she would have to be going, for she had told the its that she would be back for dinner, and probably Mr. a would accompany her.

obably he will, said Mr. Moorhouse, smiling.

s. Moorhouse pressed them both to stay, but Ruth said he felt she must go. She did not know why, but she had erwhelming desire to be at home.

er they had walked on some distance, Mr. Bowen

:
ave you packed any of Dick's clothes and given them to
h his hiding-place?'

o. Why?'

man does not usually go off without taking some clothes few other things with him, especially when he has got a s start.'

had never thought of that.'

hen we get in you will be going upstairs. Slip into his and pack what you think necessary in a portmanteau and it down with you.'

en Ruth went upstairs she packed a portmanteau as itiously and as noiselessly as possible, although she felt ad not much need to fear being disturbed for the Jane stood stock still with a terrified expression upon her face. Mr. Bowen, seeing her nervousness, said coaxingly:

'Take one of the girls with you. I would go with you, for I see you are frightened, but I have had a very hard day, and am tired.'

'I'll go with Jane, sir,' said a plucky, mischievous-looking

'That's right; now you'll not be afraid, Jane, with Lizzie to accompany you.'

When the girls had left the room, Ruth asked:

'What is the meaning of this, Alf?'

'Well, you see, the girls will be questioned by all with whom they come into contact. It is best to have them prepared, and in such a way that they do not know that we are preparing them. We must, as far as possible, throw the authorities off the scent so far as the house is concerned. You see, Angelo has thrown them off his track and baffled us.'

'Do you think that we shall ever be able to find Marian?'

'I cannot say,' he answered, with a look which meant that he doubted it. 'Of course,' he went on thoughtfully, 'it is possible that we may find some clue that will help us to trace her; but, you see, they have now got into the open country, and will be travelling on roads frequented by motor-cars even at this time of year. 'They may be now in London or Edinburgh; I know not where. I confess myself beaten for the time being.'

At this point the maids returned and told them what they thought was missing. Jane said she could swear that two suits and a portmanteau had been taken, and also a number of articles from the dressing-table and drawers.

Mr. Bowen thanked them, and Ruth added that they could now return to the kitchen, and she could manage herself if

Jane would bring in the pudding and jelly.

'Clyro is a pretty little village,' said Mr. Bowen after a few moments' silence, more for the sake of talking than anything else. 'I was thinking to-day how snugly it nestled in the cradle of the hills. I was surprised that the builders had not speculated in that direction. It is not far from the town.'

'It is only a mile from the bridge,' answered Ruth; 'but I think the toll may have something to do with the apparent stagnation; though some of the inhabitants will not be sorry that it still maintains its old-time appearance. It is no doubt a sweet little place, though some people say that it is rather

Personally, I should not care to exchange places with fits inhabitants.'

o place like Cusop Manor,' replied Mr. Bowen, with a

ey chatted on for some time, and did not hurry over their
They had both had a hard and anxious day, and greatly
ciated the rest and refreshment. They had finished their
rt, and were just about to rise from the table, when one of
haids appeared with a scared look upon her face. She
ed her mouth to speak, but though her lips moved, no
I was heard.

ell, Mary, what is the matter?' asked Mr. Bowen in

iring tones.

lease, sir—he's come !' she gasped.

ho's come?'

he policeman, sir—Jane is talking with him now—I him saying—as how—he wanted to look round the s—indeed-to-goodness—he—he did.'

st then Jane appeared, looking almost as frightened as. She pulled at Mary's sleeve, as much as to say, 'Get into the kitchen; what do you want here usurping my on? You ought to know your place better.'

nen Mary turned to go, Jane began:

hortly after we got back into the kitchen, Miss Ruth,

Master Richard's habits. He asked me if master was out last night, and I said he was. He asked me if I knew whether he had taken any of his clothes with him when he went away. and I told him of course he had; did he think that Master Richard would go away without? He turned to the constable and said that he had told him that Mr. Llewellyn had gone away, and there was no need to search the house; but the constable said that he had got the warrant, and he was going to do his duty. I'll be even with him yet for this. I know Mary Iones—he's sweet on Mary, he is—and I'll tell her what a scoundrel he is, and how he has added to your suffering, the unfeeling vagabond! The other gentleman told him plainly that it was no use, but he still persisted, and would have his way. I told the gentleman all about the master, and explained to him that he had taken his clothes and gone off during the night, so they had no need to trouble any further. I wanted to spare your feelings, mum, and I should have been able to do so if it had not been for that young upstart. I suppose he thinks if he can get you into further trouble he'll get promotion, so that he can marry Mary; but I'll put a spoke in his wheel, for Mary loves you, miss, nearly as much as I do, who have known you for the last fifteen years.'

'You have always been a faithful servant, Jane. You have been a great help to me since mother died. I know that you have done your best now to spare my feelings, but you had

better go and ask them in.'

When Jane had gone Ruth turned to Mr. Bowen and asked:

'Who can the gentleman be with the constable, Alf?' Why, a detective, of course,' he answered, smiling.

He had scarcely uttered the words when the men entered the room. The detective was most polite and profuse in his apologies for intruding in this manner when he knew that their feelings were so sensitive. He presented his search-

warrant, and commenced to go from room to room.

CHAPTER XXIV

STILL IN THE DARK

letective and the constable searched the house, but not, os, as minutely as they would have done if the former of been told by the servants that some of Dick's clothes nissing. When they returned to the dining-room, the ive began to tap at the old oak panels, but Mr. Bowen then the precaution to run the dinner-waggon a yard or or on, so that it would be opposite the narrow door g into the dungeon.

Des he think that my brother can pass through oak, whispered Ruth to Mr. Bowen, just loud enough for tective to hear.

'Do you know Johnson, of the detective department?'

- 'I was going to say, as well as I know you, but I must say, a great deal better. I am very fond of your class of work. In fact, Johnson says I should have made my fortune in a few years' time as a private detective. When he has an interesting bit of work on, he sometimes comes to my diggings after I get in from meetings, and stays until the small hours of the morning, when we both go over the pros and cons of the case in hand.'
- 'If you are half a match for Johnson, I had better give up this job.'

'Why?' asked Mr. Bowen, smiling.

'Because you will have got your friend into more comfort-

able quarters than we could provide him with.'

'Well, now,' answered Mr. Bowen, with the easy grace which was so natural to him, 'you don't think that I should help a man to violate the law, do you?'

But you would not think that you were violating the law,

because you think him innocent.'

'Now look here, officer. I see that you are not without insight and ability by the way you got round the servants, who, mark you, would give their lives for their master and mistress. You have had more experience in criminal matters than I—do you believe him guilty?'

'I can hardly say.'

'But you have got the facts of the case.'

'I'm not sure that I have.'

'Then sit down here, if you have time to spare, and I will give them to you.'

'Would you be wise in doing so?'

'I can trust you.'

Mr. Bowen went over the essential points recorded in the last chapter, and then asked:

'Now what do you think?'
'But the skirt and the note?'

'The note—a forgery; the skirt—part of the plot.'

'I quite agree with Johnson now. You have gone to work in a most business-like way.'

'Will you go with me first thing to-morrow morning and see

for yourself?

'I shall be happy to do so. I will meet you at the bridge to-morrow morning at half-past seven and have a look at your clue.'

r. Bowen went with him as far as the door, and in a few tes returned to the dining-room.

braw up to the fire, Ruth,' he said, as he poked the ashes the bottom of the grate and put on more logs, which soon to blaze. 'I want to warn you. For a time don't go to or let Dick come to you during the night. I know by you have said, that in your opinion it is the best time, in all probability the house will be watched, especially at

ut I felt sure from what the detective said that he would

ip the search, and I was so thankful.'

e may, or he may not. But it is nine o'clock, and I must. Tell Dick I shall see him to-morrow, but not to-night.' I tell him that you have saved him to-night from capture. eve that detective would have found the panel if you had

copped him in the way you did.'

don't think he would, for I had sounded the panels e, and found that, whoever the maker was, he had pated this danger. What I was afraid of was that the ng might cause Dick to come up.' es, I trembled on that account, too. If you had not that about his clothes they would have searched much closely. I wonder what will be the end of all this.' on't worry about it, dear,' said Mr. Bowen, as he went

been murdered for fear of the risks the abductors might run by

taking her a long distance in the car.

'We discussed that point together,' Mr. Bowen replied, 'and it was the only point upon which we disagreed. I hold to my theory of abduction as firmly as I did before. Marian is strong and healthy, and would not have submitted without a struggle; and the rubber-heel marks would have given us some evidence of this struggle, but there is no sign of it. All the footmarks indicate leisure rather than struggle, with the exception of those on the drive and the place where the car was standing. That there would be great risk in taking her a long distance, I admit; and the more I think of this, the more I am impressed with the great importance of the heel-marks where the car left the Brecon road. It may be that Marian is at no great distance from us at the present moment. I think this probable.'

'If I can get any clue of her, I will have the whole country searched within ten miles of this spot,' answered Mr. Moor-

house, his face brightening with a gleam of hope.

'You may depend upon it that she is well hidden, for both the detective and myself are confident that Parchment is in the swim. I am convinced, after what the detective said, that they did not take Marian down the other side of the river, though I cannot agree with him that they threw her into the water. We will keep our eyes and ears open, but if I were you I would not let anyone know that we have a suspicion of this; if you do, and it gets to their ears, they will undoubtedly remove her by some means. Perhaps you think that I do not really believe in the abduction theory, but that I am talking like this merely to encourage you. I tell you I am perfectly honest in what I say, and you will probably find out the truth of my words.'

'My word! you compel me to believe in your theory. I'll get old Thomas to slouch round and find what information he can. I feel fifty per cent. better than I did an hour ago.'

'If that be so, will you accompany Ruth and me to the Manor? I was thinking that we might make a call upon our

prisoner.'

Before they separated, Mrs. Moorhouse said that she had been thinking of the loneliness of Ruth, and asked if they did not think it wise for her to take Mrs. Thomas into her confidence, and ask her to be at the house as much as possible during the day and to sleep there at night? They all agreed

his after Mr. Bowen had been convinced that she was a nan to be trusted; for he said that the fewer the people were in the know, the less likely was their secret to leak

He said, too, that he had been thinking over this matter self, and had thought of Jane, but probably Mrs. Thomas ld be better. A second person was really needed if the oner was to be supplied regularly with his rations, and they to avoid prying eyes and listening ears. He was sure that authorities had not the slightest suspicion now, after what detective had said, that Dick was in his own home; but he felt that there was need for caution, though there was no ter cause for fear or alarm.

hen they arrived at the Manor they found Mrs. Thomas there already, so they summoned her into the dining-room

told her the circumstances.

Lauk-a-day!' she exclaimed, 'an' me an' my old man have n a-thinkin' Master Richard might be wanderin' in the wet cold and fog on the Black Mountains, or hidin' in the s of the Abbey, or in some cave or disused quarry, or gone Merica.'

Well, you see, he is in none of these places, Mrs. Thomas,' ied Mr. Moorhouse. 'We thought we might take you into confidence, for we felt that we could trust you.'

Trust me with Master Richard's safety? she said half

He heard Mr. Moorhouse answer:

'Master Richard found it out by accident, and never thought it would be of any use; but they kept the matter secret, though they knew not why. Now we believe God led them to it, and prevented them from letting the servants know of its existence. We want you to be here as much as possible with your mistress, so that, while one of you is attending your young master, the other may be on the look-out.'

'I will gladly do it, sir, an' them servants shall not have the

least 'spicion.'

'That's right. Would you be able to sleep here at night?

Your young mistress is so lonely now.'

'With pleasure, sir, if you think it necessary, and Thomas will be ready to do the same.'

'You will be able to fit a room up for both of them?' asked

Mr. Moorhouse, turning to Ruth.

'Certainly I will. You shall have the green-room, Mrs. Thomas, which you and your husband may call your own for the present.'

'Indeed-to-goodness, no, miss! Would not this raise the

'spicions?'

'You are right, Mrs. Thomas,' said Mr. Moorhouse. 'Have you no room near the servants' quarters, Ruth?'

'Yes, there is the nursery.'

'That's just the room I was a-thinkin' on, miss. That's just the ticket. It will remind me of old times. I shall feel young again.'

'See! You won't forget where the spring is?'

'No, sir, I'll remember.'

Her old wrinkled face lit up with real joy at the thought of being trusted and of being able to do something for her young master and mistress.

'You will warn your husband that the matter has to be kept

strictly private.'

'No fear of him saying a word, sir. We both know that Master Richard is innocent, and we should like to have our revenge on Mr. Parchment. We know that it is wrong to harbour these feelings, but we can't help it. We feel sure that he is at the bottom of this, and many others share our opinion. Williams the Wern, Jones Cwm Bach, and Meredith the Craigie, all thought that we were right in our 'clusions.'

'Well, now I want you to keep a sharp look-out for an hour,

give us warning if anyone approaches the house. Will go and see if there are any strangers about, Ruth?' she came back in a few moments and said that the coast clear. From the nursery window they could command a w of all the approaches. While they were getting the room by they would watch the roads. If anyone came, they would nediately give warning. If they gave one loud knock, they st stay where they were. The two men then descended the row stair.

We'll fit them up an electric bell to-morrow,' said Mr.

ven, as they groped their way down.

A good idea, answered Mr. Moorhouse, coughing. 'This

musty old place.'

Well, my boy, how is it now?' he asked, more cheerily than had spoken since the blow had fallen. 'This looks susous; almost like a smuggler's den, or coiner's secret chamber.' Or like a monk's cell,' added Mr. Bowen, as he noted the ll table and writing materials.

hey both shook Dick's hand heartily, but he did not reply, y noticed the evidences of sorrow upon his much-altered

ntenance.

I've never had a shave,' said Dick, as he saw his two friends ing intently into his face in the dim light of the readingthing contrary to law. They often laugh and say that I can go into places with impunity where they dare not go singly. They would have no suspicion who you were, and would ask no questions, seeing that you were with me as my agent.'

But if they did find you out, their confidence in you would

be gone.'

'I don't think so. They know by the papers that I am positively certain of your innocence, and they are not so unreasonable as to refuse me the benefit of the doubt. They know that they are indebted to me in many ways, and will not refuse a kindness if I ask it, even on your behalf—that is, if I guarantee that I will be responsible for your safe-keeping in case you are wanted. They will know that it is not customary for a criminal to engage in the arduous Christian work of the slums, and it will help to confirm your innocence.'

Dick then asked if they had found any clue. When Mr. Bowen had finished telling him all he knew, he said sadly:

'I really do not know what to think. Supposing, after all, on some pretence or other, they did get Marian over the bridge and then threw her into the river.'

He bowed his head on the little table and groaned.

'Marian never went through the bridge-gate, Dick,' replied Mr. Bowen with firm conviction. 'The evidence is most conclusive on that point.'

' Dick, my boy,' said Mr. Moorhouse sympathetically, 'don't be down-hearted. The cloud will lift and the sun will shine

again.'

They did what they could to cheer him, but he said he had gone over the facts that Ruth had given him a hundred times, and he was unable to see any daylight at all. He did not know what to think, and so far as doing was concerned, he was helpless, cooped up in that horrid den.

'How's the historical novel getting on, Dick?' asked Mr.

Bowen lightly.

'Not getting on at all,' he answered. 'I did try hard, but found that it was no use, so I began to chronicle my present experiences, the probable plot and its possible solution.'

'So we're to be favoured with a present-day tragedy instead

of the historical one?' said Mr. Moorhouse.

'I suppose so. God knows there is enough tragedy in our lives at present. I felt this was the only subject I could write upon, for my brain and heart are full of it. I have put my

le soul into the work, and have found a little relief, though much satisfaction, in the doing of it.'

Don't do too much at it. I want you to come to Leeds

rous and strong rather than emaciated and worn.

I will try my best,' he replied, brightening up a little. 'I your idea. I thought I might have to spend months, be years, in this wretched place.'

But the air seems fresher than it did when we were down

re.

Yes; I found a channel up there almost like a drain. I Ruth to bring down that long pole, and when I got the out I found there was a narrow opening in one of the old resses, which had no doubt been made for ventilation. I a current of air through now, and this, with the heat from oil-stove, has dried the place wonderfully.'

Try and be content for another month. Then you shall air enough in Uncle's car to a few miles beyond Hereford,

then on to Leeds by train.'

I wish we could hear something of Marian.'

That will come in time, and I feel confident that it will be d news when it does come.'

But the evidence seems to point in another direction.'

Never mind the evidence. Most of it is only conjecture,

'It's quite true. I gave you my reasons a few minutes ago,

but you did not seem to grasp the facts.'

'Sometimes I can scarcely think at all, and my mind seems a blank, I am so bewildered. If you are convinced of the truth of this, do you think that I could do anything during the nights while I am staying here which might lead to her recovery?'

'I think your wisest plan will be to sit tight where you are.

I am going to put on a disguise to-morrow and see what I can

find out'

As they shook Dick's hand in parting he said:

'I could never have borne this sorrow if you had thought

me guilty.'

They both asserted that such a thought had never entered their heads. They could see that their visit had done him good, and they left him in far better spirits than they found him. The thought of leaving his dungeon in a month had had a decidedly cheering effect upon him.

They listened a moment before they opened the door at the top of the passage, to make sure that no one was about, and

then quietly stepped into the dining-room.

They found Ruth in the library, sitting with her hands clasped round her knee, looking into the fire. She started suddenly when she became aware of their presence in the room.

'A shilling for your thoughts, my dear,' said Mr. Moorhouse

brightly.

'I was just thinking how thankful I feel that you do not

doubt Dick's innocence.'

'Tut, girl! I cannot doubt it. We know where he was and what he was doing at the time the calamity happened. Dick

has just been saying the same thing.'

'How strange!' she replied. 'You have read a good deal in science and philosophy. Can you explain to me how mind seems to influence mind, though there is no point of contact? I have been sitting here pondering over the matter for the last ten minutes. I have noticed the same thing over and over again.'

'I am afraid that I have no satisfactory answer ready. We will have a talk on the subject of telepathy some time when our minds are more at ease. I must go now, or Auntie will be scolding me when I get home. I suppose you will be

staying for the rest of the day, Alf?

es; but I will not be late home.'
am very sorry that we have broken into your holiday so, but I am afraid it cannot be helped.'
should have come in any case, under the circumstances;

erhaps it was well that I was here at the beginning of this

,

am sure it was. I don't know what we should have done

ut you. Good-bye for the present.'

while he went to have a chat and a smoke with Dick. gladly excused him, for she felt sure the company would be brother good. About half-past eight he came up from ungeon, and asked to be excused again. He wanted to make preparations for his work on the morrow. Dick he had been discussing matters, and he wanted to work plan that he had in his mind.

ext morning Mr. Moorhouse had a letter from Marian's lians, saying that Angelo had been again to see them, natically declaring that Marian had been tragically pitched the river by some squire fellow. He had produced a tional newspaper report to prove his words. He was in toxicated condition. They had been as kind to him as could under the circumstances, but he became greatly erated by their continued firmness in refusing him

'Well?'

'I am fully convinced that Marian is still in the land of the living, but a prisoner. Angelo, wicked though he is, would no doubt hesitate at shedding his sister's blood. He would try to get the money by bluff. The fact that he produced the newspaper to show that Marian was dead pointed to the card he was playing. Your advice to her guardians not to sign away the money until he produced a death-certificate checkmated him again. Now, when he is driven to desperation he will not hesitate at anything. When he comes out of jail, I believe Marian's body will be found in some pond, with the suggestion of suicide, but not of foul play.'

But why will Marian be supposed to have committed

suicide?'

'Because Angelo is too careful of his neck to have anything

like foul play.'

'I see; and you think that if Marian were murdered, her body would have been found with some note upon it implying suicide?'

'That is so.'

'Then how do you account for the skirt and note and no

body—no suicide?'

'These were only the preliminaries of the plot. If the supposition fails to extort the money, then we shall have to face the real thing.'

'You feel convinced of this?'

' I do.'

'Then we must leave no stone unturned in trying to find Marian before her brother comes out of jail.'

'Yes; that reminds me that I must be getting ready for my day's work. I want to catch the ten train.'

'Where are you going?'

'Don't be too inquisitive, Auntie. I've got a little parcel here from Johnson, but I am waiting for another that I ordered last night.'

He had scarcely uttered these words when a maid appeared at the dining-room door, saying that a boy had brought a

parcel for him.

'Excuse me rising before you have finished, but I must be off.'

He went to the boy, got the parcel, and rushed upstairs into his room.

Mr. and Mrs. Moorhouse lingered much longer than usual

their breakfast, talking over Angelo's apprehension and probable and improbable things that might happen he came out. Presently there was a faint knock at oor.

ome in,' Mrs. Moorhouse called, thinking that it was one

e maids.

her great astonishment and consternation, there appeared ad a coarse-looking farm-servant. Both master and ess were too surprised to speak.

lease, I be come ta see ef you con gi'e me a sitchewation.' That do you mean, man, by intruding upon our privacy is manner?' asked Mr. Moorhouse sternly.

ndeed-to-goodness, sir, I be starving. I binnet a beggar,

I wants wark.

nd manners,' added Mr. Moorhouse. 'Why did the nts let you in? They ought to have known their business r.'

dinna trouble the servants, sir. I comed straight in.'
What right had you to come straight in, I should like to

thought as how you might not see me if I didn't.'

f you've come straight in, go straight out,' said Mr.
rhouse hotly, rising and pushing back his chair.

h, John, don't hurt the man, though he is rude and

brown matted, unkempt hair upon his head, and a well-worn felt hat in his hand.

Mr. Moorhouse kept making an effort to speak, but he would burst out again into another fit of laughter. Just at this point Mary appeared to clear the table. She looked wonderingly from her master to her mistress, then to the door that opened from the dining-room into the hall, and at the sight of the stranger she stood still and stared.

'Have you seen that gentleman before, Mary?' Mr. Moorhouse asked, his broad shoulders shaking again as he went off into another fit of silent laughter. He had always seen Mr. Bowen before in clerical attire, and this strange transformation tickled him beyond control. Mary stood stock-still

and looked at the man, but did not venture a remark.

'I think that my disguise will do,' said Mr. Bowen in his natural tone.

'Indeed-to-goodness, it's Mr. Bowen!' exclaimed Mary. Then she, too, joined in the laughter of her master and mistress.

'I shall believe in the philosophy of clothes after this,' said Mr. Moorhouse. 'Where are you going?'

'I'm going for a day's outing. I am going to get the ten train to Glasbury for a start. I cannot say any more at present. Don't say that you have seen me in this disguise, Marv.'

Mr. Bowen spent the whole of the day going about the cottages on the hill-sides and visiting the cider-shops and public-houses; but he returned home at night baffled and somewhat depressed. He said that the only really interesting time he had had during the day had been when he got to the station in the morning. He saw the detective on the platform, got into the same compartment as he did, begged a pipe of tobacco from him, and made a few remarks about passing events, but the detective had never discovered his disguise.

When Mr. Bowen returned to Leeds, he laid the whole matter before Detective-Sergeant Johnson, and all that could be done was done. The gang in London and elsewhere was watched closely. The police knew, from what Johnson had said, that if they found the young Squire they would be no nearer a solution of the mystery, for he knew no more than Mr. Bowen. So they did not trouble much in this direction, although the warrant was still out for his arrest.

CHAPTER XXV

CHURCH AND PEOPLE

rrangements for Dick's departure were at length comand he was now to leave for a time, perhaps for ever, me of his childhood.

as the sun had set, and the mists were beginning to in ghostly folds over the river, three men left Moor in the motor-car, their faces almost hidden with their mufflers, and the collars of their great-coats.

men went on to the platform of a country railwaya few miles beyond Hereford—one a clean-shaven the other with black imperial beard. Dick had asthe common name of Smith, for he had facetiously did his best to settle down contentedly to his new surroundings and work.

Mr. Moorhouse left the wayside railway-station and returned. He stayed at Hereford an hour or more, and had a little refreshment, for he knew that if he did so he would have moonlight by which to travel the rest of the journey, notwithstanding the fog. When he left the city he found, to his delight, that the fog was not so thick as he had anticipated, and he arrived home earlier than he expected.

His wife's anxiety was greatly relieved when he came in and told her of the safe departure of their friends, for they had felt

that the chief danger was at this end of the journey.

Near the end of November Mr. and Mrs. Moorhouse were sitting one evening in front of the bright log-fire in the library, when the housemaid came in and announced old Thomas and his minister.

'Show them in, Mary,' said her mistress.

Thomas came slouching in slowly, with his eyes on the carpet, with his minister, as he was termed, at his heels.

'We be come, Mr. Moorhouse,' he drawled, 'to ask a favour.'

Well, Thomas, and who is your friend?

'It's Mr. Goodman, our minister, sur.'

Mrs. Moorhouse asked them to sit down, and as she did so she noticed that Thomas had put on a black coat and vest, with collar and black tie, but still wore his week-day trousers and heavy boots.

'Rather a dirty night,' said Mr. Moorhouse, as he looked at

the young minister.

'Yes,' he answered. 'The fog is very thick and the cold drizzle is rather unpleasant, but duty must be attended to.'

Mr. Moorhouse noted the refined accent and the honest, open, intelligent features of the young minister as he answered:

'The path of duty is not always pleasant.'

'No,' said the other. 'I found that out early in my ministry. I did not like the thought of coming here to-night, seeing that you are still suffering that awful suspense which must be very painful; but the members of our church were most persistent in urging me to come, for they knew how much you had helped in many ways the social and religious work of our town; and I was finally induced to see you by the thought that in helping others it might help you to forget, for a little at least, your own burden. This is the first time I have personally come into contact with you, and I hope you will accept my heart-felt

thy. You will no doubt remember that I joined with others in writing you at the time your niece was abducted.' y both noticed the sincerity of the young minister's and they felt instinctively that his were by no means ormal utterances.

lo remember your letter,' said Mrs. Moorhouse, 'and I you will allow me to give my belated thanks. There ch a calm confidence and trust in God, stated in such a unaffected way, that your letter was very helpful to me. d have written you a reply, but I had so many; and if it e known that I had written to some and not to others, ld no doubt have caused jealousy.'

u believe that our niece was abducted, then?' asked

oorhouse.

ollowed closely the statement of Mr. Bowen, your friend, was convinced that he was not far wrong. I doubt that archment as much as he does, and believe that he could up the whole mystery if he liked; but it is my opinion, is shared by many others, that he is too deeply implito give any clue. I believe this is the general feeling townspeople, as well as those of the country round. I hat he has already lost many of his agencies, and others given him notice, so that his villainy is not losing its which is another proof of the Scriptural statement:

'You are a Yorkshireman?' interposed Mr. Moorhouse.

'I am.'

This statement gave them a fruitful topic of conversation, and they talked on for some time about the county of broad acres. Then Mr. Moorhouse apologized for the digression, and asked what had brought them out on a night like this.

'Well, sur,' said Thomas, 'we be goin' to have a bazaar, and we thought as how you might help us a bit if you or Mrs.

Moorhouse would open it for us.'

'I see; what is the object of your bazaar?'

'Well, sur, if you were to come to our place you would see as how our schoolroom is fast tumbling to pieces. It's like my old body, sufferin' from age an' infirmity. We've patched up an' patched up, until it's all patches.'

'Then it ought to be new again, Thomas!'

'Well, sur, it isn't, an' the rain be comin' in awful this wet weather.'

'Bazaars are not much in my line, Thomas. I think you had better talk to Mrs. Moorhouse. What do you say, dear?'

'I hardly know what to say. You're in Cusop parish, are you not, Thomas?'

'Yes, mum.'

'Why don't you attend your parish church?'

'I did, mum, for some time after I did come into these parts, but I got tired of it. I did get no good. Mr. Thirdly was always talkin' about them 'ere candles, an' I needed the Sun of Righteousness. I never did get much help; but it was on account of my wife that I left.'

'How is that? I always thought that Mrs. Thomas was a

good woman?'

'So her is. There isn't a better little woman in all this country. But it happened in this way: It is many years ago now, and Mr. Thirdly had only been here a year or two, when our little baby died. My wife, she sent for the clergyman, but he was away at a cricket-match, and his housekeeper said as how she would tell him when he came home that our little one did want baptizing. When he arrived home he said that he was too tired to come up that evening, but he would come first thing next morning. Our little one died during the night. We both prayed for it an' for ourselves. Mr. Thirdly came just afore dinner-time. I was away at work, but when I did go home to dinner I found my wife sitting looking queer-like—her eyes red with weeping, an' no dinner ready. I asked

vas the matter. She asked me if I did think that the four little one had gone to hell. I said I didn't think the Bible said, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven." d her what had put the thought into her head. She told e young clergyman had said we ought to have baptized it ould not come, for he doubted whether it would be saved. He said all unbaptized children were lost."

I had been there I would have sent him after it to

e it,' interposed Mr. Moorhouse.

, John, don't!' exclaimed his wife. 'Well, Thomas,

next?'

ell, mum, I went to see him, and of course he was a man, an' could argie, an' he proved from his Fathers, or at he called 'em, that he was right. I came away from ouse feeling wretched an' miserable. After the funeral I at I could not go to church, so I went to the Baptistel. I liked the minister, an' I had a talk with him. He dout to me from the Bible that my fears were ground-He knelt an' prayed wi' me, an' I came away wi' me in gone. I told my wife what he had said—that God had ransplanted our little one from His garden on earth to a radise above, and that heaven would now be dearer to of us than ever it had been before. We started then regularly to chapel, an' we've gone ever since.'

the soul and its God. One of the main purposes for church-

going is worship.'

'I quite agree with what you say; but their complaint is that innovations and ritualistic practices have been introduced to such an extent as to be offensive, and that the beautiful liturgy is made almost meaningless by the way it is gabbled over. They say that the service is formal, mechanical, and cold; that there is no inspiration, no moral stimulus, and no sympathy. Your clergy have undoubtedly a great opportunity, but I am afraid that many of them are neglecting to grasp it. With their endowments they are freed from much financial worry, and might give themselves entirely to the moral and spiritual uplifting of the people; while we ministers have to spend a great deal of time and energy in raising money for the upkeep of our chapels and our stipends.'

'How is your stipend raised?'

'Entirely by voluntary contributions. Mr. Thomas is a deacon in my church. We have a few farmers who work along with him, but we have no wealthy people. Yet we manage to pay our way and keep things going.'

'Your people must give a great deal better than ours.'

'I have no doubt they do. I know that Mr. Thomas will forgive me if I tell you that he gives one shilling a week.'

'A shilling a week out of eighteen!'

'Exactly. People will give when they are receiving, and when they realize their responsibilities and moral obligations. They look upon the chapel as theirs.'

'But why should people leave their Church?'

- 'I don't think that people do leave their Church, but only change their regiment. I don't think that God ever intended that in the Church there should be uniformity or a dull monotony. In Nature there is one underlying principle—life; but there is not uniformity, but variety, and beauty, and an essential unity. So in the ideal Church there is not uniformity, but variety, and at the same time an essential unity. Let any man belong to Christ and he belongs to me, whether he is called Roman Catholic, Church of England, or anything else. I believe there would be a great deal less bickering, fighting, and quarrelling if this principle were understood.'
- 'But, really, you do not say that Nonconformity is equal with the Church of England?'
 - 'I don't think there is Church of England or Noncon-

ty in the sight of God, but that true Christians in both and mmunities form the Church of Christ. If professors are to dged by the Master's test, I think that many, both in the ch of England and Nonconformity, would fall short; fore I am compelled to believe that the good in all ans form the true spiritual Church—the Ecclesia. The els in the Church do incalculable harm, especially to outs. I have often heard them say sneeringly, "See how Christians love one another!"

ut why don't you come and work within the pale of the

ch?'

am working within the pale of the Church, Mr. Moore—the universal Church.'

erhaps so.'

r. Moorhouse then asked what they intended to do, how a they were going to spend, and so forth. After they had a satisfactory answers, and Mrs. Moorhouse had been told eir self-denials and struggles, and had been again appealed an econsented to open their sale, and to do what she could alp them. When they left, Mr. Moorhouse said:

believe that young man is doing a really good work, ding to reports. I hear that his chapel, which is the st in the town, is crowded. I sometimes feel that I will r subscribe another penny to the Church unless there is

self-denial meant; but he shall not be a loser by it. Such devotion deserves reward.'

'I saw one thing during your conversation with Mr. Goodman in a light I had never seen it before.'

'What was that?'

'I have heard on several occasions from the clergy and others that Mr. Bowen was so evangelical in his teaching and evangelistic in his methods that he was turning his church into a chapel and Church-people into Nonconformists. Now. Mr. Goodman, without intending to do it, has thrown quite a different light upon it. He says that it is the ritualist who is driving the people into the chapels in order to get food for their souls, and that where there is a strong evangelical vicar, Nonconformity is weak. I have been thinking the matter over, and can see that it is quite feasible, and that those who want the Gospel and spiritual power-and these are the real strength of the Church-will go where they can be best helped and strengthened. I liked, too, the reasonable way in which he admitted that there were many formalities in Nonconformity, that extempore prayer even might be formal, but that the crux of the ritualistic controversy was not a question of form or no form, but life or death; that it was supplanting life by mechanical acts—making the Church, so to speak, into a religious theatre, giving undue importance to ceremonial to the exclusion of the vital, and putting the spectacular in the front, the power and sympathy of the Christ-life in the background. I noticed, too, that he had no objection to ritual if it were an expression of spiritual life, but only when it supplanted it. He was tolerant enough to allow the liberty he claimed, for he said that neither he nor any other had a right to dictate how his or her spiritual life had to express itself. It was mere formalism that he objected to.'

CHAPTER XXVI

A DEEPLY LAID PLOT

ons were touring the country in a motor-car which had a purchased out of the spoils of one of their jewellery peries. They had started from London up the Great th Road, and visited Edinburgh and many other places of rest in the land of heather. They completed their Scotch by visiting, at Angelo's suggestion, the Burns Country. I spending a month in sight-seeing, they travelled from Ayr arlisle, intending to return to London by the west route, he Lake District, Preston, and Rugby.

they were hidden from the traffic on the main road. Grab took from under the seat a small portmanteau, drew from it an old ragged suit of clothes, and began to make up a disguise, while the others lay down lazily on the grassy bank and lit cigarettes, watching the transformation of their chief, and making from time to time witty gibes about his make-up.

'You make a splendid Weary Willie,' said McCarty. 'We'll wait here until your return, and if we are disturbed in

any way, we'll be busy repairing our car.'

Grab was away longer than they expected, but they did not mind very much, for they had plenty to smoke, and they had filled their flasks before they left Preston. When he returned he said that he had got all the information he required from a loquacious servant and a stable-boy.

He soon changed his clothes and washed his face in the

brook which ran under the hedge.

They went on to Southport and had lunch at one of the best hotels, after which they sauntered out upon the sea-front. As they went along they laid their plans for the coming night. Grab said that the moment was most opportune, for there was going to be a dinner-party at the house that night, and no doubt the silver would be displayed to full advantage, and might be left ready for them to take away. The man was a retired mill-owner of very considerable wealth, a fact he was very fond of impressing upon his friends. There would be no moon until the early morning, so he thought they might get their work done before it appeared.

The escapade proved as exciting as any they had experienced for some time. They left the motor-car in the same place as it had stood during the morning, with Angelo in charge, and went forth to reconnoitre. They went very cautiously to work, for they were strangers to this neighbourhood, and had not much information about its habits. They always followed the papers closely, so they knew that there had not been a robbery in these parts for a long time. This would be in their favour. They had a small bag of tools with them, but they found they were unnecessary, for a pantry window had been left open, probably on account of the closeness of the weather.

They would not have been as confident of their success if they had been acquainted with the whole conditions. The fact was that the retired mill-owner was a somewhat nervous man, and guarded his possessions with jealous care. When

ad the house built he had the latest inventions in burglaryas put in, and among others was an electric arrangement h could be switched on or off at any time. He did not to the servants, but undertook the work himself. he had much money about the house, for he paid almost is bills by cheque, and only drew enough from the bank eet his personal needs and those of his family. Grab and companions were familiar with all the latest inventions in It was part of their work. But to ensure safety, the thing they did when they entered the house was to open a door ready for flight, if necessary. They found that Grab right in his supposition. The butler had left all the plate sideboard, covered with a tablecloth, instead of putting vay in the safe where it was usually kept. The thieves red about five hundred pounds' worth without any diffi-, and were satisfied. They were making their way out one of them stepped upon a mat, and to their astonisht this set bells ringing all over the house. The dogs began ing and barking furiously. The house suddenly became ndemonium.

stead of going along the highway to join their car, Grab his companion rushed quietly across a side tennis-court, the rhododendron-bushes, and across a field, on the other

of which their car was in hiding

grounds, Grab and his confederates were going south with the

missing plate at the rate of twenty miles an hour.

This escapade caused them to abandon their trip to North Wales, and to steer directly south. Avoiding the large towns as much as possible, they arrived at Whitchurch in time for an early breakfast. They put up at an hotel as ordinary motorists would, posing as London barristers returning to their work after their holidays. They told 'Boots' that they had had a breakdown during the night, and asked him if he could give them a fairly strong box in which to pack the broken mechanism. Fortunately, they said, they had duplicate parts, which they always carried with them in case of accident; they would like to have the broken parts sent on at once, so that they might be repaired by the time they arrived. They gave him a handsome tip to take the box to the station. He had not the slightest suspicion that the well-dressed, well-spoken gentlemen would be capable of any dishonest action. The box was labelled 'Motor Engine Fittings,' and as such it went its way, the carriers little dreaming of its value.

Grab and his companions made merry over their night's work as they devoured, with keen appetites, the home-fed ham

and the new-laid eggs which were placed before them.

When they had breakfasted they made up their minds to put another hundred miles between them and the scene of the burglary. They went on through Shrewsbury to Hereford, where they arrived about lunch-time. They partook of another hearty meal, and afterwards slept for a couple of hours.

About four o'clock Angelo woke up and aroused the rest,

saying:

'Seeing that we have been denied the beauties of North Wales, what say you if we have a look at the southern part of the Principality? I see by the map that we are close to it.'

The rest fell in with this suggestion, and after they had had a cup of tea, they started out for the county town of Brecon.

They had put on their goggles, partly for disguise and partly for protection against the dust and flies. As they were leaving the town a boy was crying the evening papers, the great sensation being a clever burglary near Southport. They bought a paper, and when they got out into the country they read the account of their night's exploit.

'Another mystery,' said Angelo, who had bought the paper, and now handed it to his 'pal.' 'Those blundering constables

no doubt ready for their breakfast this morning after bing the outhouses and park for five or six hours.' sat back in the thickly cushioned car, and in a leisurely enjoyed the beauties of the scenery through which they passing. 'Those mountains in the distance, which are

enjoyed the beauties of the scenery through which they passing. 'Those mountains in the distance, which are d with the glory of the setting sun,' he thought, 'are like sentinels keeping guard over the peaceful inhabitants of peautiful valley.'

rive slowly, Bill,' he said to his companion at the wheel.

n enjoying this immensely.'

injoying fiddlesticks!' replied Bill, reducing the speed.
I ought to have been a poet, or artist, or novelist—that's
you ought to have been, not a crib-cracker or coiner. I
l enjoy another drink.'

again with a dreamy look in his eyes, as if he had not

what his companion had said.

wish I had become an artist,' he soliloquized, 'or a list, or a sculptor. This is a free-and-easy life; but I can really happy in it unless I keep reviving pirits with intoxicants. The coarseness of some of these we sometimes jars upon me, though I am bad enough in proscience. I wish I had stayed at home. If I had done might have been comfortable enough and had real enjoy-

'I'd rather stay where I am,' Angelo replied.

'Nonsense, man! Turning chicken-hearted again at the sight of the country, are you?' he said, with a scornful leer.

Angelo reluctantly got out of the car, for his conscience was causing him great trouble. It was evident that he was ill at ease, and his companions, ignorant, of course, of the thoughts which were surging through his brain, were determined to liven him up, as they said. Angelo did not know the reason of these troubled thoughts, but the cause was no doubt to be found in his sister's earnest prayers and the spirit of God striving with him in answer to them. He drank to drown his thoughts, and though they did not stay here more than half an hour, in that short time he had successfully stifled the pleadings and accusations of his guilty conscience, and his mind was once more with his companions and his present mode of life.

They got into the car once more, Angelo this time taking

the driving-wheel.

'We are coming to an old-time place now,' he said, as they approached the little town of Hay. 'The deuce!' he exclaimed, as they drove past a young lady with a small basket on her arm, her eyes fixed upon the ground as if lost in thought.

Angelo at once reduced the speed.

'What on earth's up, Jones?' said Grab. 'Smitten with love, eh?'

'Didn't you recognize her? Why, it's Marian, my sister!'

'Then you're in luck's way, and no mistake. I hope you won't let the bird slip this time. The Southport hundreds will now be a mere nothing, seeing that you have thousands at stake. You'll share the spoil, I hope.'

'I don't know,' he answered, with a snarl. 'She's foiled me long enough, though she's about the only one who has ever been a match for me; but I've found her at last. How has

she got into this hole, I wonder?'

'Shall we stay here the night and investigate?'

'No; we'll go on a few miles farther, and then lay our plans. We may spoil our game if we stay here, where everybody knows everybody else, and everybody's business but their own.'

Angelo's mind was now full of turbulent thoughts. Sometimes he thought of her pleadings for his reformation; then he would think of the money that was his, yet could not be got without her consent; then he remembered bitterly how stoutly she had refused to let him have the money. The constant

rks of his companions kept the worst passions of his nature

ey found a little town about seven miles farther on, where put up for the night. Angelo was in no mood for contion, so they decided to let him alone until the following ing. The people in these parts retired early, and they very pleased to follow the custom, for they felt the need

xt morning Angelo suggested that they should hire a and trap and drive back to Hay and see what they could out. His pals were delighted to find him in this mood, ncouraged him by treating him to several revivers. They hat they knew that he was not going to be beaten by a in, and by many similar flatteries urged him on.

ey hired the horse and trap and started on their mission. they got into a quiet country lane, they took from a leather bag beards, moustaches, and rouge. They had well the art of disguise. It had often served their wicked When they arrived in Hay, they put up the horse Swan, and went sauntering leisurely round the town. lere's a man who will serve our purpose,' said Grab, as he ed out a middle-aged man talking with a labourer. low do you know that?' asked McCarty.

ecause he'll do anything for money,' he replied.

'Ves.'

'You are an agent, then?'

'Yes.'

'I am glad I have been so fortunate as to meet with you. I may need your help. If so, I shall be able to put some remunerative business into your hands.'

Parchment became at once keenly interested, which Grab

was not slow to notice.

'Are you buying property here?' asked Parchment.

'Not at present. I am here to investigate a certain case, but the business is strictly private and confidential.'

'Are you a detective?' asked Parchment, as he glanced

apprehensively up and down the street.

Grab chuckled to himself when he saw this, and thought how fortunate he had been to find so quickly such an admirable tool; but he answered Parchment's question in a careless, reassuring tone as he said:

'Not I. I cannot claim affinity with any such august body. Pardon me a moment. I will just ask my friends to excuse my absence for an hour, if you have so much time to spare.'

'I am at your service,' answered Parchment, with a satisfied air, for he thought he saw a possibility of replenishing his

empty coffers.

He had looked forward to reaping a rich harvest from the Moor Estate, but in this he had been foiled. He had also anticipated a good sum from the Llewellyns, and here, too, he had been frustrated. He had been increasing his expenditure in view of the prospects before him; but these had been blighted, and he had been left in the lurch. But he would be equal with the pious philanthropists and psalm-singers yet. He little knew how soon he was to have the opportunity.

Grab stepped back from his companions and addressed

Parchment, saying:

'I suppose you have a private office?'

'Yes. Come with me.

They were soon sitting in Parchment's private den, each

with a glass of whisky before him.

'In the first place,' said Grab, 'I want to make inquiries about certain people in this neighbourhood. If you will agree to answer my questions, and help me in every possible way you can, and keep "mum," I will pay you liberally. What do you say?'

'I will do my very best to furnish you with all the informa-

'I saw a young lady last night going al station and through those lodge-gates opp fair, and moderately handsome. Can you

'Yes and no. She came here last v paint the beautiful scenery with which abounds. Her name is Miss Turner.'

A comical smile flitted over Grab's face Parchment, seeing this, went on:

'I don't think that this is her real name to her past—absolutely silent. When she never mixed in society at all, and she soo "the mysterious lady artist." In the spr came a strange gentleman into this very r buy an estate which was in my hands. him!-much below its real value, and I v it, as I had great expectations from it. here he stumbled accidentally upon Miss T Grab smiled again as he heard this name he knew her from the beginning-probabl know. This sometimes happens. At an wife adopted her, and I heard some kind of that they had found out that she was real is engaged to the young penniless Squire j of this town, in the next parish.'

'Do you know if these people are really of this young lady?'

'I don't.'

'She has a large fortune, which her brother wants to get, and is determined to get, either by fair means or foul. He does not want to hurt her if it can be helped, but he means to have the dollars. If a game of bluff won't do it, then other means will be tried.'

'What do you suggest?'

'Do you think that we could abduct her, keep her prisoner for some time, and arrange the matter so that there will be no doubt that she has committed suicide? He could then get a certificate of death, and the money as next-of-kin. I don't see how it has to be done exactly; I am not an expert in these matters. Her brother is, and could easily plan, yet he won't do anything in the matter, and he has very reluctantly given his consent for us to do it. We have had to promise that we will not hurt her, but we shall do as we think best. I know nothing about this district; but you are acquainted with every foot of it. You will be invaluable to us. Now, I have been perfectly frank and straightforward with you, and I am now going to make you an offer which I consider a very good proportion of the plunder. If you will help us until we are successful, I will give you two thousand pounds besides out-of-pocket expenses.'

Parchment did not reply for some time. He sat lost in

thought.

'Now I think I've got a plan,' he said at last, 'which I am prepared to help to carry out for the sum of two thousand pounds, if you do as I wish, and it seems to me the simplest method. I have an old score to settle with the young Squire. I can do what you wish and throw the suspicion upon him.'

'Well, what is your plan?'

'What I suggest is this. We must wait another week or so, until the weather breaks and the fogs set in. You say that you have a motor-car, and nothing could be better for our purpose. She could be secured, goggled, gagged, veiled, and carried off without any suspicion being aroused by anyone seeing the car. Then I am willing to write a note in the handwriting of young Llewellyn, inferring a quarrel and foul play, which will be easily believed by the people of this town and neighbourhood, for he had formerly a bad reputation. You know the old saying, "Give a dog a bad name and hang it." The gossips would soon hang him.'

'I see. Could you also find a safe asylum for Marian until we secure the money? You see, the farther we take her the

greater risk we run of being found out.'

chment's brow contracted. He was faced with a difficult

em; but the cloud was only of short duration.

have it,' he said. 'I am an agent for an estate that in some of the mountainous region about Llangorse about two miles farther on than the little town where you at you have left your car. There is a shepherd's cottage up the mountain side that would just do if we could get able jailer.'

our plan is an admirable one. Why don't you come out s hole, man?' asked Grab, with an oath. 'You would

your fortune in twelve months in town.'

I had been twenty years younger I would not have

here.'

er they had discussed the details of the plot, Grab d Parchment to lunch with them at the Crown. In the con they drove round to familiarize themselves with local tions. The evening was spent in Parchment's office, with tiful supply of whisky.

en Angelo began to think over the arrangements he said hself: 'That old Parchment's a brute, anyhow. I'm bad h, but I have never robbed any that could not afford to

little. When I found out that one of our robberies had ruined a certain jeweller I sent him back my share of under—anonymously of course. But this man is one of

CHAPTER XXVII

A GAME FOR HIGH STAKES

MR. PARCHMENT sat in his private sanctum with a glass of whisky half empty before him. His face was beaming with satisfaction.

'I'm in luck's way at last,' he said to himself. If I had stuck out for it I might have had a hundred pounds, instead of fifty, on account; but I would have done the job for nothing rather than have missed this opportunity for getting my revenge. They have had their innings; now I'll have mine. I'll cry quits with them before this day fortnight. This will put me on my feet again. I must look at the cottage and get it made habitable. I don't think it has been repaired for fifty years. I can charge these repairs to the estate account and to Grab as well. He's given me twenty pounds to furnish one room. Cells are not elaborately adorned, as a rule, and I don't see why I should depart from the rule. I won't, either. I shall be able to pocket another fifteen pounds on this transaction. By Jove! I ought to have another glass of whisky on the strength of this.'

He poured out another glass, and went on:

'Now I must keep my weather eye open, and watch carefully the habits of this girl and the rest. I'm glad that parson fellow is away. He's got a keen eye, notwithstanding his sanctimonious airs. Won't this take the shine out of them? It will stop their so-called philanthropic work. But I must get to work and find a jailer. Let me see. There's old Jones, the poacher, and his wife—just the pair. They will do anything except work. They are vicious enough for the job, and will make admirable jailers. I must see if I cannot engage them. I'll tell them that the young lady is demented, but not at all dangerous; she will only require strict watching, especially at

ange of the moon. She must have certain hallucinations, one of them a desire for freedom. I must stuff their heads with funny stories of the doings of lunatics. In shillings a week and a free cottage will do the rest, for will be free to follow his profession. I will drive over ee them to-morrow, for if I am not successful I shall to look elsewhere. I have not much time to spare, e weather will soon be breaking up, and this will be our

drove out next morning to see old Jones, an idle, en fellow with a most unenviable record, who was posiloathed even by the majority of workmen in the neighbod. His wife was not much better than he. Those and known her in former years said that she had been by her husband's cruelty, that her life had been blighted wickedness. She was the most disagreeable, peevish in the whole district.

chment told them all kinds of stories about Marian to hem the impression that she was not in her right senses. rongly emphasized the condition of secrecy. When he the wages, they readily consented to undertake the

chment kept a strict eye upon the inhabitants of Moor and the Manor, and chuckled quietly to himself as he necessary toilet requisites, much less furniture, but he presented another bill for twenty pounds for extras. He said he had arranged to drive over to Glasbury in the afternoon; his horse would then have a good rest, and be ready for the remainder of the journey. He brought out an ordnance map of the district, and they went very carefully over the route they had to travel. He showed them the note he had prepared to put into the pocket of Marian's skirt, along with a letter in Dick's handwriting, pointing out how correctly he had imitated it.

'That's a point I wanted to talk over with you, said Angelo. 'Why should we involve this young man at all? Our case would be as good, even better, with the idea of suicide.'

'You are wrong there,' replied Parchment; 'for if this young man is at liberty he will move heaven and earth to find Marian. Our risks will be much greater if he is allowed to go on the scent. Unless the plans upon which I have spent so much time are adopted, I shall withdraw.'

'If your plans are so well laid, I don't see how the Squire is

more likely to find a clue than anyone else.'

'I tell you plainly that we shall either have to make it a real suicide, and destroy your sister, or implicate Llewellyn. We shall have plenty of prying eyes without his.'

'I cannot see that this will serve any useful purpose; we've nothing to do with your personal quarrels,' answered Angelo,

with warmth.

Grab could see that his temper was rising, so he coaxingly persuaded him to accept the plan as arranged, which Angelo

finally did, but not without many vigorous protests.

Parchment then told them of his plan about the bridge. One of them was to dress like a lady, as Marian dressed. He had got the things ready in a parcel, and he would point out to them how to act.

At this point the office-boy came in with some refreshments, for Parchment had arranged that his office should be their hotel for the night. They sat and smoked and drank until, late in the evening, they sallied forth. The streets were deserted, the rain was falling fast, and two large streams of water were running rapidly down each side of the street, overflowing the gutters. Parchment took them to the bridge and explained that each foot-passenger going across had to pay one halfpenny toll. If they tapped at the cottage window close against the gate the man would open it, draw a bolt, and let them through. It would be best for the gentleman to pay for

lady.' The old man would ask no questions, but probmake some remark about the weather. He described
to and proposed that one of them should make up like
and that when they got through the toll-gate they should
rel, and one of them should mention 'Mad Dick.' He
gave them an idea of the footpath on the other side of the
told and suggested that they should tear the skirt a little, to
that there had been a struggle, place the note in the
tet, and put the skirt in the water, hooked to the branch of
the then described the way over to the village of
the they would meet their friends.

hey returned to the office, where a bright, cheerful fire

ed a hearty welcome.

If to-morrow night be like this, it will help us immensely,' Parchment, as he stood with the door ajar. 'Good-night, lemen. I'll be here early in the morning. I have given clerk instructions to go to a certain farm about some irs, so he'll not come to the office, and you'll be safe ugh here; but do not go outside on any consideration.' rab went with him to the outer door, quietly locked it, returned to Angelo. All lights had been put out before thment left, but the two men sat drinking and chatting for e time by the light of the fire. At length they both dozed

A GAME FOR HIGH STAKES

of the road that Angelo had to take in the evening. Fortunately, they did not meet with anyone who was at all likely to suspect them, or to report that strangers had been in the neighbourhood. They went back to the office as they had left.

Late in the afternoon Parchment rang up the hotel in Hereford where their accomplices were staying, and asked them to start at a certain time, to come very slowly, and arrive at the agreed point exactly at seven o'clock. The night was an ideal one for their purpose, and everything seemed in their favour. As Parchment was starting out for the village of Glasbury, about four miles on the road along which they were to bring Marian, Angelo said:

'I hope you will see that Marian is treated kindly, Parchment.'

'I'll see to that, don't you worry,' he replied assuringly, as he went down the steps and drove away.

Shortly before seven o'clock Grab sauntered forth alone with a parcel under his arm, and his umbrella over his face. About five minutes after he had gone Angelo followed, also with a small bundle.

The car was just drawing up under the shade of the trees by the side of the park as Angelo arrived at the meeting-place. Without a word he handed the bundle to Grab, rushed off in the direction which had been pointed out to him in the morning, and called at the Manor to tell Dick that he was wanted. Then he went as hard as he possibly could in the direction of Moor House, and inquired if Miss Turner was in. When he was told she was in, he gave his message to the maid and departed. He found his confederates where he had left them, one of them dressed in female attire, the other two quite prepared for their dastardly work. Grab and McCarty rushed off with gag and other necessaries in readiness. Angelo caught hold of Grab's arm as he whispered hoarsely:

'Don't be rough with her, Grab.'

'It's all right, old boy,' Grab replied, and was immediately

lost in the fog.

The two villains soon reached the avenue of trees, and waited a few minutes, until they heard a light footfall. Marian came on, bent on what she believed to be an errand of mercy, when suddenly she was seized and gagged before she could scream or give any alarm. She was carried across the park and lifted over the wall. Her skirt was taken off, she was placed in the car, and a thick motor-veil was put over her hat and face after a

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lady' and gentleman they were le moved gently away.

As they passed through the towr alarm, but it was all to no purpose. soul, nor could she have done anythi was too tightly wedged between he the presence of mind to look critical passed the dim lamps in the deserted Angelo, but the other man was unkno

They drove quietly and cautiously town behind them. The night was cold and pitiless. They could scarce them, although one of the men had s lit two more lamps immediately they h She knew the direction in wh behind. She had almost fainted when she was fi herself that she must be brave, and the escape. She sat perfectly still, but wi alert. She knew that they would be so village of Glasbury, and she had not ! saw the welcome light of a cottage win But the door was closed, and no went on past the cottages and shops unt where a road turns sharply to the righ Here, to her astonishment, the She shuddered as she thought of the s yards away. and mand

only drive with extreme caution until you join the main road.'

They lifted Marian bodily out of the car into the trap, and took off the goggles and motor-veil. Parchment tied a thick muffler over her eyes, and Angelo tucked a rug round her. As he stood beside the trap he looked up at Parchment, who had already mounted, and was reversing the cushion with one hand while in the other he held the reins.

'Treat her kindly,' Angelo said, almost sadly.

'All right, Jones. Good night.'

'Good night, Morgan,' answered Angelo and his companion. Parchment whipped up the horse, which started off at a brisk trot. The rain beat in their faces as they drove along.

'Morgan, eh?' thought Marian; 'but they cannot deceive

me. I know two of the kidnappers, at any rate.'

Marian could not tell how long they were on their journey, for the strain upon her nerves had been so great that she was only semi-conscious for the greater part of the way. What she did know was that they had passed through Talgarth, and were now travelling along a rough country lane with high hawthorn hedges and brambles on either side. At length they came into the open, and began to climb a very steep hill. They arrived at a lonely cottage where a lamp was dimly burning, and not a word was spoken as she was lifted down. But she recognized the features of Parchment, notwithstanding his mask, as she had previously recognized his voice. She was carried into an upper room, with a bed in it and a few articles of furniture. The muffler, between the folds of which she had got a glimpse of her captor's face, was now removed; but he was gone. Her hands and feet were set free, and, standing up, she saw only a man and woman, both with a cruel light in their eyes and a cynical leer upon their faces.

'What does this mean?' Marian demanded, almost fiercely.

'Why am I kidnapped in this wicked way?'

'Kidnapped, eh?' said the man mockingly. 'That's how you address your friends, is it? You mean to throw our kindness in our faces, do you? Indeed-to-goodness, this is ingratitude, and no mistake! If that's your game, you shall go for once supperless to bed. Come on down, Marget.'

The two turned, went out, locked the door, and stumbled

down the rickety stair.

'I should go supperless to bed in any case, for I could not eat if I tried,' she answered; but her words were unheeded.



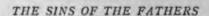
sat down exhausted upon a bare wooden kitchen chair; he and arms ached awfully with being tied up for so long mind was bewildered, and she could not collect he ughts. She burst into tears, and for some time werely. The thought of freedom again took possession and she began to examine the room. She found that mg iron bars had been recently placed before the sma dow, and that a new door had been hung, probably in the ce of one that was old and weak. There was an extranglock upon the door, and evidently no means of escape

CHAPTER XXVIII

MARIAN'S EXPERIENCES IN EXILE

MARIAN sat, she knew not how long, thinking over what had happened. She was cold and miserable, her head ached terribly, and she was constantly putting her hand to her forehead, which was as hot as fire. She looked round the room in which she was imprisoned. There were bare whitewashed walls and a very low ceiling, bearing abundant evidence of having been recently repaired. 'They have "done up" the house for me, at any rate,' she thought. An almanac was fastened with tacks to the wall over the fireplace. There were also a lithograph of the Good Shepherd with a lamb on His shoulder, and a similar print of Holman Hunt's famous picture, 'The Light of the World.' A small window looked out from the gable, and another evidently over the front window of the room below. There was a small fireplace with stone hobs and four straight iron bars across, while half a small cart-wheel hoop did duty for a fender, and a small iron bar was placed to serve for a poker whenever there was a fire. There was none on this occasion, though the night was so cold and damp. Three bare wooden kitchen chairs, a small three-legged table with no cloth, a cheap iron bedstead with a flock-bed upon it, covered with a blue and-white quilt, and a small mirror, hanging upon the wall, completed the furniture. On the window-ledge lay a comb, but no brush. There were no knick-knacks, and no evidences of refinement. Everything was square, straight, and stiff.

'What a horrid place!' she said to herself. 'It will kill me if I stay here long. Why am I persecuted like this? Why have I to be the victim of vulgar passions and wicked plots? How happy I have been, especially since August! But Dick will find out my prison. Yes, he will come and rescue me.



onder where I am? Somewhere on the cold, dreary mouns. I am not very far from home, at any rate. I wonder am near the Bwlch Pass. I may have a chance of escape. he rose and stepped towards the empty grate and looked the narrow chimney. She came back and sat down with gh. 'There is no chance there, anyhow; it is far too ow. Had it been wide, like many rural cottage chimneys. right have wrapped the quilt round me and scrambled then, having torn the quilt into strips and knotted them ther, let myself down. But I heard the ferocious vling of a dog a short time ago. This brute would give alarm if I were to try to escape; but the chance may I'll try to make friends with the dog if I get the ortunity. Animals, as a rule, are fond of me. I wonder t Auntie and Uncle and the rest are doing? This will ly break their hearts. For their sakes as well as my own ust try to be brave."

ler eyes, again wandering round the room, were arrested

he picture of the Good Shepherd.

Will He be my Shepherd now? Will He give me courage

strength to bear? I will ask Him.'

he knelt down and prayed in an earnest whisper for God's and protection.

'It's no use worrying,' she said; 'it will do me no good. God has promised to hear and answer my prayer, and He will -I know he will! I must try to look upon my present position as philosophically as I can, keep calm, have my eyes open, watch every move of my captors, and leave the rest to God. Surely this woman is not utterly base and cruel! There is no doubt some tenderness left. I will try to get round her in some way. She rose and dressed. As she put aside the pieces of calico which served for blinds, a dismal sight met her eyes. The fog was still very thick, and everything seemed sodden. There was a little walled enclosure which had at one time no doubt served as a garden; but was now overgrown with weeds and thick grass, among which were a few stunted bushes. Beyond this she could not see. She heard some one moving below, and in a short time a foot sounded on the stair, a heavy key was turned in the lock, and the sour-faced woman she had got a glimpse of the previous evening appeared with a cup of tea and three slices of breadand-butter.

'Good morning,' said Marian, as cheerfully as she could. The woman simply glowered at her as she placed the tin

tray on the table, but did not speak.

'Could I have a little fire, please, Mrs.——'

'Lunatics dunna want fire,' snapped the woman, as she turned and went downstairs without noticing the perplexed and then startled, terrified expression on Marian's face.

'Lunatics—lunatics!' she repeated, as the big brawny woman went heavily down the stairs. 'Lunatics! Then I am here as a lunatic. I see it now. These are the paid agents of that old villain Parchment, who has engaged them to look after a demented person. Whatever I say or do will be simply looked upon as the word or action of a maniac and treated with contempt.'

She saw the hopelessness of her position, and again burst into tears. It was perfectly clear that if she made an appeal, as she had made up her mind to do, it would not be treated regionsly.

The woman was for some time puzzled with Marian. She watched her closely whenever she went into the room with her meals, but refrained from conversation. Parchment had strictly charged the Joneses on no account to enter into conversation with her. Marian tried her best to get the woman to talk, but utterly failed. Her answers were always given in monosyllables,

in a snappish way, as much as to say, 'You lunatic! hold

tongue!

larian bore the cold as well as she could, but the fog ned to get into her room, making everything feel clammy, the third morning, when she got up, she was cheered by light and warmth of the sun. When she drew aside one he blinds she uttered an exclamation of surprise. The fog lifted. In front of the window, and about a mile away, the Brecon Beacons she knew so well, towering up and to the sky-line. To her right, far down in the valley, was agorse Lake—one of the places the happy party visited in ust. She had only been there on this occasion, but she had a powers of observation, and had specially noted the hills valleys, in order that she might, when opportunity offered, the scene from the most advantageous point.

had better not give my captors any hint that I know re I am,' she said. 'Fancy my being a prisoner only it ten miles from home! Oh, that I could burst the bars

is cage and fly away!'

earing a footstep on the stairs, she went on tip-toe to bed, and was in the act of taking off the quilt and sheets the woman entered with her breakfast.

Good morning,' said Marian.

lood mornin',' snarled the woman, and turning round and

how attentive he was to her, how he had anticipated almost every wish and thought. 'Yes, he will come,' she said with assurance. 'I shall not be allowed to remain in this confinement for long.' Her lunch consisted of a strip of bacon and three potatoes, which she ate, not because she felt particularly hungry, but because she was determined to keep up her strength.

But days and nights came and went, and the monotony of her life became sadder and more unbearable. The middle of November had come, and the weather was bitterly cold. Marian had often to wrap the quilt round her and walk about the room to keep herself moderately warm. Sometimes her teeth chattered, and she would tremble from head to foot. It was a difficult matter to keep her blood circulating properly, for she felt herself daily getting weaker and more hopeless. She lay at night sometimes weeping, sometimes listening to the wind as it moaned and howled round this moorland cottage. When a storm was raging she was often afraid the house would be blown down, for the gusts of wind seemed to get firmly hold of it, as if they would tear it from its very foundations. 'Perhaps this is the way that God is going to avenge me of my adversaries,' she thought. She prayed that if He did tear up the cottage in this way He would spare her But the storm would abate, and she found that God was not in the whirlwind or the tempest.

'If this confinement lasts much longer,' she said to herself one stormy night, 'I shall break down. It will be awful to die alone in this horrid place. I have borne up as long as I can.'

She rose next morning and went to the small square mirror to see that her hair, of which she was justly proud, was put up as it ought to be. She was frightened when she saw the reflection of her face in the glass: the dark rings round her eyes, the pale cheeks, and the despondent expression. 'I am getting to look haggard and worn,' she said. 'I must, I really must, try to look on the bright side.' She began to pace the room, for her feet were cold as icicles, and her hands were numbed and half frozen. She had no warm water to wash herself, and no fire to hold her hands over when she had finished her ablutions. 'My head feels hot and feverish,' she said, as she put her icy hands to her forehead. 'I don't know what would become of me if I were ill in this wretched place, with only this unsympathetic pair near me. I must shake off these gloomy



ights. I must be brave and conquer for Dick's sake. I finding this more difficult than I did formerly, owing, no ot, to physical reasons. I have not eaten much lately, e she comes with my breakfast. I must devour it ravenously, push it down as I have seen children do at a tea-party.' he cup of warm tea was refreshing. She managed to eat of the chunks of bread-and-butter, but could not attempt third. She had to drink her tea quickly, or it would have a cold. She made her bed after she had finished her infast. She was in the act of putting on the quilt when woman returned for the tray.

Would you kindly allow me to have a little fire? asked ian, almost piteously. 'I am chilled to the very bone, and been for days. I feel sure that I shall be ill if I have to

on bearing these hardships.'

Coal is very expensive here, miss,' answered the woman, 'my man has just told me as how funds winna run to it.' is the woman said this, Marian thought she could see lences of her heart becoming more tender, for she had arently been speaking to her husband about a fire.

I feel so cold and lonely, went on Marian, following up point. The woman pushed the door close with the edge the tray she held in her hand, and Marian went on: 'I ad heing ill in this place. If I am. I believe I shall die.'

'Jones the poacher—Jones the poacher,' repeated Marian, with a puzzled expression upon her face, which was watched closely by the woman, who began to think that Parchment was right, after all; but this thought was quickly dispelled, for Marian's face lit up with a sweet smile as she said: 'Ah, now I have it. Were you not ill for some weeks during the summer, Mrs. Jones, owing to a brutal attack made upon you by your husband, who was at the same time sent to prison for three months for poaching?'

CHAPTER XXIX

THE POACHER'S WIFE

as now the elder woman's turn to look astonished and dered. What could this young lady know of her history? re had she lived? Where did she come from? Why was in confinement? While these questions were running ugh her mind she stood staring with wide-open eyes and d lips at the pale, sad face before her. After standing thus ome moments, she pulled herself together and answered: Iy husband did make a brutal attack upon me last mer, and I was in bed for two or three weeks; but what ou know about it?'

only know what I was told. The man who brought our

'Oh, miss,' wailed the woman, 'can it be true that I have been repaying your great kindness and sympathy in such a cruel manner? I wish I was dead; no one would miss the miserable wife of Jones the poacher.'

'Don't say that, Mrs. Jones,' said Marian soothingly. 'I want you now to tell me what you know about my being here. I will then tell you my story, and we shall thus understand each other. It is my opinion that you have been more sinned against than sinning.'

Mrs. Jones then told her all she knew, and Marian, in return, gave her a clear account of the experiences through

which she had passed.

'Oh, miss, will you forgive me?' implored the woman in bitter anguish; for she was thoroughly broken down. All her reserve was gone; the cynical sneer had vanished from her face, and a look of unutterable sorrow and contrition had taken its place.

Marian knew not what to do for the big, brawny woman, who now refused to be comforted. The more she tried to cheer her, the more conscience-stricken she seemed to be on account of her conduct.

Marian knelt beside her, repeating passages of Scripture, telling of God's love for sinners, and of His forgiveness for those that are penitent. This did more towards stilling the storm which was raging within the woman's bosom than anything else. Marian knew the Gospel story well, and told it so simply, so pathetically, so earnestly, that it went home to the hardened heart of the poacher's wife, and as it did so it only seemed to reveal to her the heinousness of her conduct. She was utterly broken down with conviction of sin.

They must have been kneeling quite half an hour when the poacher's wife rose to her feet, and Marian followed her example. She could scarcely believe her own eyes as she looked into the scarred, wrinkled face before her. She would have scouted the idea if anyone had told her that such a transformation could have taken place in so short a time. She did not know of the experiences which had been relived in this short period. The poacher's wife had really lived years while on her knees, in comparison with the humdrum monotony of her everyday life. Simply to breathe is not to live: it is existence. We live fast or slow in proportion as we love, hate, think, act.

Mrs. Jones told Marian that while on her knees her whole life had passed before her like an awful diorama.

he face that Marian now looked at was wreathed with es, radiant with a supernatural light. The evil look had shed from the sparkling eyes, and the voice seemed no

er discordant, as she said:

God bless you, miss. You have proved a real angel of cy to me. My life has been full of conflict, trouble, and ring; but now it has entered into peace—such a sweet e that I cannot describe it. I cannot tell you how I feel. now now that God is not only my Judge, but my Father. we been shunned, neglected, and spurned for many, many s: an outcast from society—only the wretched wife of Jones poacher. But you loved me, forgave all my insults and ity; and now I know that God has forgiven me, that He s me and will take care of me. It is almost too good to rue. Your exile has no doubt been a painful experience ar, but I believe that God sent you here to be a missionary ne, to lead me to Himself. I shall never be able to repay At this point her eye caught the empty grate, and she aimed: 'I beg your pardon, miss. I had forgotten all ut the fire. The joy of forgiveness shut everything else

I'm not so cold now, Mrs. Jones, thank you,' replied rian. 'Your joy is mine. I cannot tell you how delighted

later my friends will find me out, and he may be sent to jail. If he will allow me to go I will settle a pension of a pound a week for life upon you both, and a free cottage, as you have now.'

'Nothing would please me better, miss, as you know; but Jones wouldn't believe a word you say. Nothing would move him from his opinion that you are a lunatic.'

Marian's brow contracted, as if she had met with an obstacle she had not expected. Next morning, however, when Mrs.

Jones came up for the tray, Marian said eagerly:

'I've got a plan which I think will meet all the points we were talking about yesterday, without in the least compromising your position, or giving any exact clue to my whereabouts.'

'Well, miss, if I can help you I will; but I hope that you

will not bring Jones into trouble.'

'You will be able to judge of this when you hear what I have written.' Marian then read the following note:

'DEAR UNCLE AND AUNT,

'I know this will come to you as a pleasant surprise. Oh, how I have longed and longed to be with you! and how I have prayed that God would comfort and sustain you in this great trial! You will know my feelings better than I can describe them. I cannot betray the kindness of the one who has permitted me to communicate with you, so I must be silent as to the name of the place and the locality in which I am confined. I have been anxious to let you know that I am alive and well. I trust that you will keep this note strictly private. The wife of the man who has charge of me has become a true Christian, and wishes to help me all she can without being unfaithful to him who has often been very unkind to her. She is doing her best to make me comfortable, and I have now a measure of liberty. Will you please send Mary with a parcel containing my Bible, easel, paints and brushes, and a change of clothing, with five pounds in silver, and also two or three pieces of canvas, to the Ashbourne Hotel, Talgarth, to be left till called for. Please do not ask any questions nor make any inquiries. Watch Parchment.

'With love to all,

'Your loving niece,
'MARIAN.

'P.S.—Please send me a few books and magazines. I have read the weekly paper over and over again, advertisements and



Make two parcels, as one will be too heavy for the woman carry.'

How will that do, Mrs. Jones?' asked Marian eagerly. Do you think, miss, that they would send the constables to reh for you?'

I am positively certain that they would respect my wishes.'

Then I dunna object,' she replied.

Irs. Jones sometimes spoke correctly, and at other times, ecially when excited, lapsed into the dialect. The reason this is to be found in the fact that she spent her girlhood I youth in service, in the employ of one of the best families he locality. This was in some respects an education for

The letter was addressed in a disguised hand, and when s. Jones took it to the post, Marian asked:

When do you think that you will be able to fetch the

cels?'

Jones was telling me at breakfast this morning that his pal Brecon had found out where there was some good game, I they were going to make arrangements for getting a little. said he might not be back until the end of the week. This only Tuesday, so we shall have time to get the parcels here

THE POACHER'S WIFE

Perhaps God has permitted it that we might have a chance

to get in our provisions for the winter.'

At Marian's suggestion a good stock of provisions was bought and delivered at the door. One of the farmers brought them a ton of coal, being paid by Mrs. Jones in advance, this being the only condition upon which she could prevail upon him to oblige her. They got in all they wanted before Jones was released and carefully hid it, so that he would not find out what had happened in his absence. They did not fear much on this account, for he was not at home much except to sleep, and he did not trouble about anything if his meals were provided. He never asked where the food came from, or how it had been obtained.

Marian was delighted to get her tools again, and soon had some beautiful winter scenes upon the canvas which had been sent.

Time sped on. Christmas came and went, and Marian grew more anxious about Dick. Mrs. Jones tried to get some information for her, but failed to do so, for the Wye Valley mystery was not much talked about now; other tragedies were happening and occupying people's minds, and she dared not ask directly about the matter for fear of arousing suspicion. Jones had still further reduced their allowance, so that they were again on the verge of starvation. Marian wrote another note for more clothing and five pounds more in silver. She asked for silver, because if the poacher's wife went to make purchases with gold, it would no doubt be talked about, and might get them into trouble. Marian pleaded to know where Dick was and how they were all getting on. Her joy was unbounded when she received the parcel and a long letter from her darling Auntie.

One night, during the latter part of February, Jones got wet through, and became very ill with rheumatic fever. Marian could see that this additional burden was going to be too much for his wife, so she asked that she might be allowed to help her. Mrs. Jones spoke to her husband about it, but it was with great reluctance that he at last gave his consent. Marian soon won a measure of confidence, and after a few days he was satisfied that she would not harm him or try to escape.

Marian was an excellent nurse, and proved invaluable to Mrs. Jones during the five weeks that her husband's life was trembling in the balance.

On the first of April the weather was beautifully fine. Mrs. Jones had been washing, while Marian attended the invalid.

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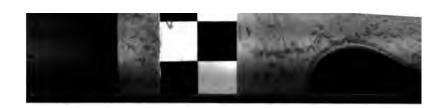
now seemed to be nearing his end. Mrs. Jones had got it of her clothes dry, and had begun to iron some of them. had still a few things hanging on the line beyond the gable the cottage, which she went to fetch before dark. She had them on her arm, and was returning to the house, when happened to look down the mountain-path, and as she did the saw a man coming slowly up towards the cottage. She ned indoors as quickly as she could, with a scared look in her face.

Oh, miss,' she exclaimed, 'a man is coming up the moun-

! It is not the doctor, I'm sure.'

farian looked through the window with straining eyes into gathering gloom, and as the man drew nearer, she spered:

It's Angelo! it's Angelo!'



CHAPTER XXX

DICK BECOMES A PREACHER

DICK was filled with astonishment at the sights which he beheld when Mr. Bowen took him round his district. Poverty and dirt met his eyes at every turn. He had been in London and other large cities, and had seen the cathedrals, the art galleries, and places of public interest, but he had never before beheld a city in all its naked reality. He had never seen much of the seamy side of life. This was his first visit to slumdom.

Dick was deeply impressed with the services on the Sunday, especially with the large gathering of men. The earnest Gospel sermons were something new to him. He saw that Mr. Bowen preached from the heart, and he could see that the truth went home to the hearts of the people.

Dick addressed the Band of Hope meeting, and cottage meetings, and other similar gatherings with considerable

success.

'I am beginning to think that you are finding your vocation at last, Dick,' said Mr. Bowen one night, as they sat chatting

after supper.

'I don't know about finding my vocation, but I have got deeply interested. I often wish that I could shake off the fear of apprehension and know that Marian was well. Then I could give my whole thought and energy to it.'

'Don't fear, Dick. Trust. "All things work together for

good to them that love God."'

'It's difficult to see it sometimes. Alf.'

'I admit that; but if we believe in a providential God we need not worry. Will you address the Brotherhood next Sunday?'

'My dear fellow, you overrate my abilities. I should break

down or otherwise make a mess of it.'



No such thing. You have been visiting hard lately.

n't trouble about any but the worst cases for the rest of the ek, and you will have time for study. I will join you in

yer for a blessing.'

Dick was finally persuaded to speak, and, accordingly, the otherhood was advertised to meet in the schoolroom instead the church. Dick had already the reputation of being a nightforward, manly fellow, and the men turned up in large

nbers to hear his maiden effort.

He stood on the platform on the Sunday afternoon with and trembling, as he faced the crowd of men present; but or the first few sentences he lost all self-consciousness and ame absorbed in his theme. His high-strung, nervous aperament swayed him up and down, the Welsh fire flashed in his dark eyes. He spoke now softly, then with strong phasis. The men in the audience were moved now to les, then to tears. Though this was a maiden effort, the aker had had much preparation for it. He knew what sin and bitter repentance; he had an experimental knowledge that Power which had enabled him to overcome trials and iculties.

When the committee met during the following week, the mbers gave a glowing report of the effect of Dick's address.

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There was an outburst of laughter, in which Mr. Bowen joined, as he blushingly remarked:

'The sooner the better.'

Ruth came, according to promise, and sang two solos at the service, while her brother gave another powerful address. Mr. Bowen noticed how attentively Ruth listened to her brother, and saw the tears standing like two crystals in her dark eyes. There was a report on the following morning in the Yorkshire Post, giving a glowing account of the speaking and the singing. One statement that the reporter made gave our friends some uneasiness. He said:

'The speaker and the soloist might have been brother and sister, for their characteristics were so much alike. Both had the same classic features, the same quiet dignity and strength, the same spiritual force and earnestness of purpose.'

Ruth stayed about a fortnight and then returned.

One morning during the first week of Ruth's visit Mr. Bowen was sitting at breakfast and looking over his letters when a telegram was handed in to him. He opened the envelope in a leisurely way, but his attitude soon changed as he read:

'Locality theory correct. Had note. Safe. Writing.'

The words were mysterious enough to a stranger: they were meant to be; but Mr. Bowen understood them. He jumped up, said to the maid, 'Tell the boy there is no answer,' and rushed out into the hall. Throwing on his hat and coat, he left the astonished servant to shut the door, and hurried off.

Dick had just risen from his breakfast, and saw Mr. Bowen coming along the street, walking and running in turns. He rushed and opened the door for him, for fear he might do some

damage.

'Whatever's the matter, Alf?' he exclaimed.

'Read that,' he replied breathlessly.

'Thank God!' said Dick fervently.

'Will you go up to Herbert's and tell Ruth, or shall I go to the works and telephone?'

'I should be glad if you would telephone, for I would prefer

to be alone for an hour.'

Mr. Bowen could see that the news had given Dick a great shock, and he could partly understand his feelings.

Parchment was on the platform at Three Cocks Junction, about six miles from Hay, waiting for a train. He had two

three small parcels in his hand, and a fowl which had lently just been killed.

I wish I had some paper to wrap round this,' he said to

self. 'I'll ask this porter for a piece.'

he man said he was sorry that he had no brown paper, but ewspaper would do, they had plenty in the lamp-room that been taken from trains after the passengers had left. chment replied that any kind would do. The porter ught a whole newspaper and wrapped it round the fowl, le the owner held it by the legs.

There, that will be better,' he said, as he entered an empty

partment of the train which had just come in.

le was in the act of putting the fowl on the rack when his neye saw that it was a Yorkshire Post, and one of the imms facing him at once riveted his attention. It was ded 'A Welsh Singer in Leeds.' He tore off the whole et and sat down. He found that it was over three months old. Like enough to be brother and sister, eh?' he muttered, he a knowing smile. 'Suppose they are brother and sister. It is is really too good. A preacher and Gospel singer—ah, ah! I'll clip their wings, though, and don't you forget it.' Now, let me see,' he said, as he sat down in his private later in the day. 'I cannot go to Leeds this week, for I

The poacher is evidently on his last legs, and his wife might not keep the damsel safe. All things considered, we had better get her out of the way, if her brother will consent to it, when he comes out of quod. I must communicate with him as soon as I have got Liewellyn safe.'

Dick was doing his work consistently and successfully, in blissful unconsciousness of what was pending. He had grown most popular, and it was rumoured that the Bishop had offered him ordination. He had taken his degree years before.

About a fortnight after Parchment had laid his plans he went off one Saturday morning by the eight o'clock train, taking a third-class ticket for Birmingham. He thought suspicion might be aroused if he booked to Leeds. He knew that he was suspected already, so he must be very careful. He managed to get into an empty compartment, and there made up his disguise. When he had finished he examined his face closely in the mirror between the photographs that adorned the compartment.

'There,' he muttered, 'I'm all right now. My own wife

wouldn't know me; but I must keep sober.'

When he arrived in Leeds he posed as an Evangelical Churchman, anxious to know more of the good work he had heard of in the industrial part of this great city. He attended St. John's on the following day. Mr. Bowen was preaching, and a tall, dark-bearded young man read the lessons. Parchment had a suspicion that this was Mr. 'Smith,' but, being near-sighted, he could not be absolutely certain. He attended the men's service in the afternoon. Mr. Bowen was speaking, and Dick was away at the Sunday-school. As it happened, however, he met Dick face to face when he stepped out into the street.

'By Jove!' he said to himself, 'I shouldn't have known him if I had met him in a strange place, and had not been looking for him. How changed he is! But there will be a greater change before long. They will remove those fine black curls of his in Dartmoor. But I must find out where he lives. I must have everything safe.'

He followed Dick to his lodgings, and made a note of the

number, the street, and the name of the district.

He returned to Hay by an early train on the following morning, and when he arrived went straight to the police sergeant.

'Good afternoon, sergeant,' he said cheerfully.

'Good afternoon, Mr. Parchment.'

' How's business?'

'Things are very quiet at present, and I hope they will remain so. I don't want any more Wye Valley mysteries.'

Parchment might have replied that dull business suited his

constitution remarkably well, but he simply said:

'Ah, that is what I have come to see you about. Could I

get a word with you in private?

'Certainly; walk this way.' The sergeant showed him into the parlour and shut the door, saying, 'Take a seat, sir.'

'Now, I know that you would like promotion, sergeant,' began Parchment, 'and if it does come it will have to come by merit.'

'Or influence,' interrupted the sergeant.

'Just so-or influence; but merit is the best and safest path. You have a warrant out still for the arrest of young Llewellyn?'

'I have a warrant out for the arrest of Squire Llewellyn,

certainly.

Well, now, what would you say if I gave you information which would deliver him into your hand?'

'I don't think I should say anything in particular.

a very good talker.'

Parchment put on an aggrieved air. He thought the sergeant would have gone into ecstasies over the news. had pictured him rushing off at once and apprehending Dick, and instead of that he seemed totally indifferent in the matter.

'You'll never rise in your profession if you are so slow in apprehending the guilty,' said Parchment.

'That's just it,' answered the sergeant. 'I don't believe

him guilty, and I don't like having to climb down.'

'If you do not want the honour I will communicate with the Leeds Detective Department. They will be glad of the iob.'

The sergeant was thoughtful and silent for some moments. 'If I don't fetch him some one else will,' he thought, 'and not

respect his feelings as much as I shall.'

'I will fetch him,' he said aloud. 'Where is he?'

Parchment then told his story. When he had finished the sergeant said:

'I think we had better say nothing to anyone about this. cannot go to-night; I will start to-morrow morning.'

'That will do; good afternoon.'

'Good afternoon. I would much rather apprehend you,

you scheming, deceitful old brute!' he added under his breath as he watched the agent off the premises. That evening he walked thoughtfully up to the Hall.

He was shown into the library, and repeated to Mr. Moorhouse what Parchment had told him, concluding by saying:

'Now, I don't believe that the Squire is guilty, and I don't like the thought of arresting him. What am I to do?'

ke the thought of arresting him. What am I to do?'
'Your duty, sergeant, certainly,' answered Mr. Moorhouse.

They fully discussed the matter, and decided that it would be better to end the suspense they had suffered so long. They then told the sergeant in confidence about the letters they had received from Marian. They would have to fight the matter out now. If they were bound to do, so they would present Marian's letters in court. These would, at any rate, clear Dick.

'Will you allow me to search for Miss Kepworth when I

return?

'There is no need, sergeant,' answered Mr. Moorhouse. 'I could put my hands upon her in an hour's time. When we received her first letter, Miss Llewellyn was staying in Leeds. Mr. Bowen came back with her, and began to investigate. He suspected one place, and watched it closely through his field-glasses. At last he was rewarded, for he saw her leave the place for a short constitutional and then return. We should have rescued her at once, but she pleaded with us not to interfere. Before you go, allow me to thank you for your kindness and sympathy. I have one more favour to ask: Will you go in plain clothes to-morrow?'

'I have already decided to do so,' he replied feelingly.

As the sergeant left Moor House he could not help contrasting the two men he had just interviewed, which only gave stronger confirmation to his opinion of Parchment's guilt.

The sergeant arrived at Dick's lodgings just as he was having

his tea. When Dick saw him he gave a violent start.

'Don't be afraid, Squire,' said the sergeant, smiling. 'I am not here willingly, I assure you. I don't believe for a moment in your guilt.' His words were spoken with such emphasis and in such a sympathetic tone that Dick was convinced that he had come as a friend.

'Will you have a cup of tea, sergeant? and then we can

talk.'

'Thank you; I have had nothing since I left Birmingham.'
Dick rang the bell for another cup, more bread-and-butter,
and a couple of eggs. By the time tea was over the sergeant



told his story, and they went at once to see Mr. Bowen. in they had told him the facts he said:

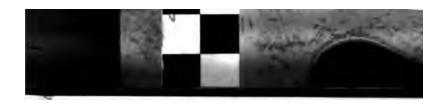
ust excuse me a moment; I'll go and ring Johnson up, see if he can come down at once. He was coming down evening in any case.'

e returned in about five minutes, and said that Johnson ld be down shortly.

That was a smart bit of work you did, sir, in finding the

ng lady,' said the sergeant.
Not at all, sergeant. You see, she said in her note that the nan would scarcely be able to carry a big parcel; it would better to make two. If a woman is big and strong, as I gined the poacher's wife to be, and yet not able to carry a parcel, then there must be some obstacle in the way. It more likely than a hill? I was dressed as a farmant, so as not to attract attention. I sat for nearly three rs on the opposite side of the valley to where I imagined was confined, keeping my eye or my powerful field-glasses he house. She came out at last, and I could scarcely resist temptation to go and shake hands with her. If it had been Squire here, I am afraid the game would have been up.'

That's quite true,' answered Dick.
You know,' Mr. Bowen went on, 'that her brother comes



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'In my opinion it would be well worth the sacrifice. I want to keep them in the dark regarding the knowledge we possess until we have got Miss Kepworth safe. If we produced her letters at this point we should give ourselves away.'

Dick took the sergeant out for an hour while Mr. Bowen and the detective talked matters over. When they were going

out the detective said facetiously:

'Be careful of your prisoner, officer. You'd better put the

bracelets on.'

When they were left alone Mr. Bowen and the detective discussed the pros and cons of the situation. They finally decided to adhere to their former plan, and start the following morning by the 11.20 to King's Cross.

When the sergeant returned Johnson asked him if he would like to see a bit of city police work, and his face lit up as he

said eagerly that nothing would please him better.

'The sergeant will call round to-morrow morning, Mr. Llewellyn,' said Johnson as they went out.

'Come round to breakfast, sergeant,' Dick called.

Our two friends sat far into the night in earnest conversation and in speculating as to what the morrow would bring forth. They would indeed have been astonished if they could have seen.



THE WYE VALLEY MYSTERY CLEARED AT LAST

the morning following the events recorded in the last upter Dick and the sergeant breakfasted with Mr. Bowen, e sergeant referred to the terrified look upon Dick's face en he made his appearance the previous evening.

It was not for myself that I was afraid, but I feared a ndal which might hinder the good work which is going on e. So far as I am personally concerned, I would rather fer anything than the pain caused by the constant suspense the last six months,' replied Dick.

I believe we shall have some startling developments before

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'I don't think you are, sergeant. If you had been, you would not have done what you have done. I want you to accept that just for out-of-pocket expenses. Now be off, or you will have no time to choose your presents.'

Shortly after they had gone Johnson arrived, and Mr. Bowen

and he were soon on their way to London.

While they are travelling, let the reader betake himself into South Wales, and once more visit the lonely shepherd's cottage. Angelo had been released from jail at the very time that Dick and the sergeant were on their way to the station. He had previously laid his plans, and was determined to carry them He expected that one or more of his companions would be waiting for him when he again walked out a free man. As it happened there were other prisoners released that morning, and as they were going out the prison doctor was coming in. He stopped Angelo to give him a little advice and to warn him to take care. By the time this interview was over all the other prisoners had gone. When Angelo stepped through the little door that opened out of the large one, a heavily-loaded dray happened to be passing. He caught a glimpse of one of his former associates, who thought he had watched all the prisoners away, going down the street. Angelo kept in the shadow of the dray until he had gone some distance. He looked back upon the castellated towers of the jail as he said to himself: 'I hope that will be my last visit to a place of that description. God helping me, it shall be.' He went to a branch of the bank where he kept his private account and drew out twenty pounds; then he took train in the direction of the Welsh mountains, via Pontypool and Merthyr. He had decided upon this route so as to avoid Hay or any of the usual approaches to the Wye Valley. He did not want to come into contact with Parchment or any of the gang, for he felt sure of what they would not only suggest, but insist upon.

When Marian saw him approaching in the evening twilight she felt no fear, for she was confident that God had heard her

prayers.

'Get to your room, miss, quick, and I'll lock the door,' said Mrs. Jones.

'No, don't be afraid, I'll go out to meet him, for I don't

want to disturb your husband.

So saying she stepped outside, leaving the poacher's wife trembling like a leaf. Angelo came up slowly, his head bowed as if he were lost in thought. The sound of Marian's light

p caused him to look up, and when he saw her he rushed ward and clasped her outstretched hands.

Marian, Marian,' he sobbed, 'can you—will you—forgive? I have cruelly wronged you. I have been base and ked; but I am sure that God has forgiven me. Will you

can you?'

Marian could not reply. She felt that words would choke to She fell on his neck and wept tears of mingled joy and row. They both wept together for some time. Mrs. Jones, o had been so much afraid of foul play, and had been nding in the doorway ready to do what she could to protect good angel, as she called her, went indoors wiping her as with the corner of her apron. Marian and her brother down upon the low wall of the enclosure which had once

en a garden, while he told her of his experiences.

I have often felt determined to give up the life of sin and time that I have been leading, but I had not moral courage bugh to break away from my companions and my associans. While I have been in jail I have seen my sin as never ore, the horrible wrongs that I have done, the suffering that have caused, and my guilt before God all came upon me h such overwhelming force that I thought it would have led me. I was in hospital for three weeks; the doctor could



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did so with all the earnestness of my soul, for I felt that this was my only chance. God answered my prayer. I found peace at last, not of exhaustion, but real peace of mind and gladness of soul. I could have shouted in my cell, but they

would have thought I was mad.

'Then I began to pray for you, that your exile might be made as comfortable as possible until I had served my time and could rescue you. I wanted your forgiveness, and to do what I could to atone for the wrong which I had done. I knew that if I told the authorities where you were confined, your life would be in the greatest danger, knowing as I do the desperate characters in our gang. I am glad now to be able to say that, bad as I have been, my hands are not stained with the blood of the slain. That's more than most of my late companions can say.'

'Oh, Angelo!' exclaimed Marian, with a shudder.

'It's quite true, Marian. I cannot understand how I have been so blind, or stayed with them so long. Since the change I have often thought how happy we might have been if I had taken your advice and that of our dear sainted parents; but it is too late now, I cannot undo the past. I must do all that it lies in my power to do, but I am afraid this will not be much.'

'I am feeling chilly. Will you come up into my room,

Angelo?'

They found the poacher sleeping, and his devoted wife sitting by the bedside.

'Have you an invalid here?' asked Angelo in a whisper.

'Yes,' replied Marian. 'He is nearing his end, poor man.'
Angelo shuddered as he was shown upstairs, while his sister

remained in the room below, making him some tea.

He noticed Marian's easel and other familiar articles, and when she brought up the tray he began to question her. She told him her experiences in exile. When she had finished her story she said:

'We must now try to bury the past as far as we can, for it seems to me that there is yet a trying time before us. What

do you think we ought to do? How shall we act?'

'I am bewildered with the complications. Our position is hemmed in with difficulties. I should not be surprised to see my former "pals" here before daylight to-morrow morning. If you return at once to Moor House you will be beyond their reach. I shall have to leave the country if I have the chance to do so.'

I would go with you, Angelo-but-Yes, I know-the young Squire.' Marian blushed slightly as she said:

Have you heard, Angelo?'

Yes; and I should be delighted if I could see a possibility your being comfortably settled. They could then blow out worthless brains if they liked.'

He bowed his head, and was silent for some time; then

ked up and asked:

Can you really forgive me, Marian? Is it possible?'

she rose and kissed him, as she said:

I do forgive you with all my heart. I have prayed for

s for many years."

Christianity is a wonderful power,' he went on-'a glorious lity, a mighty force, an all-compelling love. I cannot now ceive how people can ridicule it as old wives' fables.' Mrs. Jones interrupted him as she opened the door, and d that she was sure her husband was passing away. They th accompanied her softly down the stairs, and stood erently beside the death-bed of the poacher, who lay

ittering unintelligible words. In a few minutes he raised nself up with a tremendous effort, and glared fiercely toward foot of the bed, while a look of unutterable terror was



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'I feel fatigued, certainly, but I don't think that I have any disease. I am only feeling the effects of the strain and worry that I have passed through.'

As the train entered the pall of smoke that enshrouded the

City, Johnson said:

'I should like to look in and see an old friend of mine, a former member of the force, who now keeps an hotel. It is on the way to Waterloo, and we have nearly an hour to spare.'

'I have no objection, at all,' answered Mr. Bowen. 'The rain is coming down heavily here, but I think it is only local. At least, I hope so, for we shall have a long drive from Farnham Station.'

'We need not worry about this; it's only an April shower.'

When they arrived at King's Cross they hailed a hansom, and drove to the hotel Johnson had mentioned. No one was in the entrance-hall, so Johnson went in search of the proprietor, leaving Mr. Bowen standing in one of the passages. He heard Johnson greeting his friend in the room he had entered. At this moment a waiter came along, and Mr. Bowen stepped aside to allow him to pass. In doing so he found himself close to a door, which was slightly ajar. The passage was in semi-darkness, so there was nothing to attract his attention. Suddenly he was on the alert, for he heard a voice mention the name of Parchment. The man was saying that he had received a letter from him that morning to say that he thought the game would be up unless something was done at once, for he had been told that the poacher was dying. Johnson came out of the room at this moment, chatting pleasantly with his friend. Mr. Bowen put up his hand in such a significant manner that the conversation dropped at once, and Johnson stepped silently towards him. The exofficer saw there was something in the wind, and as this was the farthest public room in the passage, he quietly got a screen, placed it behind the two stooping men, and stood himself on the other side, so that there was no possibility of interruption.

The conversation proceeded within:

'It's very strange that he was not released this morning.

You are sure you did not miss him?'

'Positive. I waited for some time after they had come out. If he had been among them there would have been no difficulty in identifying him, for there were only about half a dozen all told.'

- You say that you saw him in jail, Binks?"
- Yes.
- And you're sure he's become a psalm-singer?' Certain.
- 'If that's the case he will probably squeak.'
- I don't know."
- Nor care, eh?'
- Great Scott! but I do. If he does we're in for twenty ars at least. The Gorse Hill affair would be sufficient to ovide us with board and lodging for that period. Then ere was the jewellery robbery in Queer Street, and a host of ners. There is also the store-den to be thought of in Whiteapel, and our country residence where the tin is made. love! if he does squeak, some of us will not escape with
- r necks as Dame Nature made them.'
- 'How did you get into conversation with him?'
- Well, I saw him the day after I went in, and you know ilways like a word with an old "pal"; but I had no oppornity of speaking to him until the following Sunday week, en we happened to be together in the prison chapel. When got up to sing the Psalms, instead of singing about the sh-pots of Moab, I sang, asking him if he were comfortable his lodgings, etc., and he told me that if he lived to get t he intended to lead a very different life. He had been

- 'What time could we arrive in Talgarth?' asked another man.
- ' We could do it easily by three o'clock to-morrow morning, I should think. There would be no fog now to stop us. If he got out this morning he would not arrive there until this evening, and would probably stay the night; if he comes out to-morrow morning we shall be there to give him a warm reception.'

As the men were discussing their plan, four detectives came quietly and quickly into the passage, as if they had risen out

of the ground.

'I think the rain has passed off,' said one of the voices within, as its owner rose and went towards the window. 'We'd better go to Blue Street and inform the captain of our intentions.'

'Let's empty this bottle before we part; we shall not have

much for the next twenty-four hours, perhaps.

They talked on for another ten minutes, and gave the detectives a good deal of information that they had longed to possess for some years. At a given signal the officers all rushed into the room, and each seized his man. There was a great struggle, in which the table was upset and glasses and bottles broken; but at last they were all handcuffed. The detective-sergeant asked that they might be got away quietly, for they wanted to secure the rest of the gang as soon as possible, before an alarm was raised. He rang up for more men. Johnson had a few words with him regarding Parchment, and he was told to wire the sergeant and tell him to apprehend him without delay.

The sergeant and Dick will be arriving home about the time the telegram arrives,' said Johnson to Mr. Bowen, 'so

I'll send the wire to the station.'

'I'm not needed here,' answered Mr. Bowen. 'You would

no doubt like to stay, and I am anxious to go.'

'By all means do. If you go to Paddington at once you'll just get a train that will take you through to Hereford. I should like to go with you, but I must stay here, for we are hoping to have the whole gang by morning.'

Success to your enterprise, but I would rather be in better Good-bye. I'll see Angelo as soon as I can, and company. if you should want any further information ring up Hay. Here's the Moor House number. Angelo will know all particulars, and will probably help us.'

'A splendid idea,' said Johnson, as he shut the door of the

o. 'You've just nice time to catch your train. Good-

Mr. Bowen arrived at the station with five minutes to spare, he wired to Mr. Moorhouse, asking him to meet him at ereford, and have the car ready for a quick journey.

He bought some papers and magazines, but his attempt at ding was a miserable failure. His thoughts were too busy other subjects. He glanced over the pictures and photophs, but reading was out of the question. He thought that had never known a fast train to travel so slowly before; but at t it steamed into Hereford Station, and he saw Mr. Mooruse and Dick waiting for him on the platform.

In his excitement he scarcely waited for the train to stop ore he jumped out and gripped the hand of Mr. Moorhouse, ing, 'At last! The Wye Valley mystery cleared at last!' Can it be true?' asked Mr. Moorhouse, with quivering lip.

True enough. Have they got Parchment?'

Yes; and I shall never forget it.'

Ruth and I went down to the station to meet Dick and the geant, and to our astonishment there was a great crowd. e constable and the railway officials had great difficulty in ping the platform clear. I should think nearly the whole

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'The whole place was turned at once into a pandemonium. People started cheering, hissing, hooting, and those in the train jumped out. I could see there was going to be some damage done, for all seemed to have lost their heads. I happened to be near the steps of the bridge, and ran up about half a dozen and called for order. The platform round me was nearly as crowded as the open space outside. In a few words I explained how matters stood. I asked the sergeant if I might read the telegram, and he readily granted my request. I told them that I should read it on one condition, which was that they would not make it difficult for the police to do their duty. I then read out the telegram:

"Squire Innocent. Cruelly Wronged. Parchment Guilty. Arrest Him at Once. Mystery Cleared Up."

'I am afraid the uproar was greater than before. Fortunately, some of the young fellows rushed forward and got hold of Dick, and carried him shoulder high, amid tremendous cheering. A small portion of the crowd followed Parchment, who was being led between the two police-officers, hooting and hissing. I suddenly remembered that Dick was not yet a free man in the eyes of the law, so I called a halt and explained matters. "We'll carry him through the town, then," they said, and they did. Dick was so overcome that he wept like a child. I easily succeeded in getting bail for him, so he's free at last.'

Mr. Bowen then told him what had happened in London.

'What about Marian?' asked Dick eagerly.

'You'll see her in a little over two hours' time, I hope, old man.'

As the car was drawing near to Moor House, the housemaid rushed to open the door, for all the servants as well as their employers were greatly excited. Mr. Bowen nearly knocked Mary down as he rushed into the house.

'I beg your pardon, Mary; I didn't see you. We want a little supper. Then we're off for Miss Marian. Tell cook,

quick!

She didn't need telling again, but rushed off into the kitchen to give them the news.

Mr. Bowen turned quickly into the drawing-room, saying to the ladies almost before he saw them:

'Heartiest congratulations to everybody! The Wye Valley mystery is cleared up.'



And then he gave Ruth a sounding kiss, and shook bands orously with Mrs. Moorhouse.

How? When? Where?' they both cried.

Listen,' he said, 'the gong is sounding. Come along to oper, and I'll tell you. We have no time to lose. We are for a picnic to Llangorse to-night.'

To-night!' they exclaimed.

Yes, a moonlight trip will be splendid—better than the we had in August. Will you join us, Ruth?'

I shall be delighted if Auntie does not mind.'

Go by all means, dear. The outing will do you good.'
You're not out in the cold, Auntie dear,' said Mr. Bowen.
know you'll forgive me if I bring your niece with the rising
the sun.'

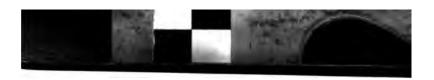
When it begins to dawn,' she murmured.

Yes,' he said in subdued tones. 'It is the power of His urrection that has done it all. What an awful world s would be without it! How dark! How cold! How ked!'

They were too excited to eat much, and after Mr. Bowen I told his story, he rose to prepare for the journey, saying:

'Are you coming, Ruth?'

'Yes; of course she is,' answered Mrs. Moorhouse.



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down the stairs; and the two who had been separated so long were soon locked in each other's arms.

This was a signal for the gentlemen to approach, and the

meeting can be much better imagined than described.

After some time Angelo was called and introduced to the visitors. They discussed the question of his safety. Marian told them that she thought the secret dungeon would be the best and safest place, and to this they all agreed.

Mrs. Jones said she did not mind being left alone, for her mind was easy now. They each offered to stay, but she insisted upon all going; for she could plainly see what this

reunion meant to each of them.

As the day was breaking the happy party arrived at Moor House, which was as lively as if it were midday. A meal, which might be called a dinner, had been provided, the servants vying with each other who should do best and most.

Mrs. Moorhouse was in the morning-room. She had told Mary she would prefer meeting Marian there, as it was in this

room she really found her niece in the first place.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE BITERS BITTEN

RIAN and her aunt did not emerge from the morning-room some time. At last they joined the rest of the party, and filed into the dining-room and sat down to their meal, ppier than they had been for a long time. When the meal over they drew their chairs round the cheerful fire in a nicircle, for the keen spring air was rather sharp at this y hour. Marian gave them a detailed account of her six nths' imprisonment. After she had finished, they began to cuss what steps they had better take to secure Angelo's ety. Marian was suggesting the secret dungeon, when the

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without the rest knowing anything about it. This has been the most remarkable piece of police work for many years.'

'I don't want to give them away, Mr. Bowen. They have not been friends to me. I have only been a useful tool, as I can clearly see now; but I don't like the thought of betraying them.'

'You will not betray them at all. They have betrayed themselves already. You will only be giving the police a better opportunity to get back stolen property, and return it to the rightful owners. You told us a short time ago that you hoped, as far as possible, to atone for the past. This is one way in which you can do it, for if the police can only make a clean sweep this time, they may be able to prevent a good deal of crime for some time to come. They want to find out all the old haunts of the gang before anything gets into the papers, or is made public in any way. They want to make the capture as complete as possible.

'What are the questions?'

'Will you answer them as I read them out?'

'Do you really think that I should be doing the right

thing?

'Morally I do, and this ought to be the primary consideration. The social side of it is not worth mentioning, for if we did allow it to stand in the way we should be considering a dishonest clique in preference to the good of the people at large.'

Then I will give them more than they have probably

asked for.'

When Mr. Bowen rang up Scotland Yard fifteen minutes later he had two closely written pages of terse matter on the

little desk-board before him.

He had some difficulty in getting on the trunk wire to London, but there was less delay than he had expected. Johnson was waiting for his reply. He was only half-way through when the girl at the exchange said that time was up.

'Keep us on until we finish, and charge according to time,' said Mr. Bowen, and thus he was able to give all the informa-

tion without another break.

'That's all at present. I'll remain in until lunch, and

if you want anything else, ring up.'

Splendid! this is far beyond our most sanguine expectations, replied Johnson. 'This will help us wonderfully. I hope to be with you to-morrow. Good-bye.'



members of the gang, whe has; but by their sch plans, for which his brainot benefited much for He has certainly never habeing in difficulties, he clutches, from which he sa

'I am glad to hear yo What do you advise us to

'Well, I should let him he is until the trial is over. Your case will come on a you will soon know the wor

'Do you think he will ha
'I hope not; at least, I
Men are sent to prison
Whether our prison system
judge; but I don't think the
I believe if we can get him
will settle down to a quiet
respectable citizen.'

Mr. Johnson wired to Lo supplied him. He remains rest of the week, having int time, as the London detecti

complications.

opposite the door, and as it came on to rain, they entered and asked for a room where they could drink his health.

The arrest of the men had caused a great sensation, for some of them had families, and occupied expensive houses in the West End, keeping up a great amount of style. The court was crowded with friends and relatives of the thieves and with those who had been robbed. Mr. Bowen did all he could, and then returned to Moor House.

While the gentlemen had been busy getting the evidence the police required, Marian had been busy attending to Mrs. Jones. She had helped her in making the arrangements for the funeral, and had paid all the expenses. Mrs. Jones, Marian, and Ruth were the only mourners. After the funeral they made arrangements for the furniture to be removed at once into one of the almshouses belonging to Moor House.

Mr. Johnson rang up towards the end of the week, when the trial was over, to say that nothing had arisen with regard to Angelo. There was now only the abduction case, and Angelo

need not have much fear about this.

Mr. Bowen wrote him to ask if he thought it best now for Angelo to have more freedom. Mr. Johnson replied that a warrant was out for his arrest, and he had better lie quiet. The trial would come on in another week, so he would not have long to wait; then he would do his best for him. Angelo had better make his way to Hereford Station on the evening before the trial, and allow him to take him into custody, and he would then be better able to take his part.

Mrs. Moothouse would hardly allow Marian out of her sight,

and kept repeating the words:

'This my daughter was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found.'

'Auntie,' said Marian affectionately, 'I fear this sorrow has

made your hair much more silvery than it was.'

'Yes, dear. God only knows what I have suffered; but character is perfected through suffering, you know. Our lives are made up of sunshine and shadow, storm and calm, victory and defeat; we enjoy the sunshine, the calm, and the victory, all the more after we have experienced the darkness, the storm, and the fearful conflict. I sometimes think that the same law governs the growth and development of character that governs the physical elements. There is seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, in the moral as well as in the physical world. I cannot help thinking of the golden sheaves

- riuciice.

'But really, Auntie, I c judge and jury and a crc stammer, and say just wh unsaid what I did want to

unsaid what I did want to
'Think of your brother
to him. Pray earnestly
issues in His hands. It
for I believe with you t
but you will have the assura
with you. The one who w
feel sorry for him, notwit
Bitter execrations are upon
I am sure that he will welco
the publicity of the trial.
prosecution to break down
persecution he would suffer w
imprisonment.

Poor Parchment!' said Ne that it is extremely foolish as

Yes, dear. They that dig them themselves. An evil life this world.

The day of the trial came at by the detective, and our little town.

After a trial lasting all the n and Parchment was found guilt penal servitude.

waiting for the verdict. Many were the hearty congratulations

expressed by their acquaintances.

They felt worn out and exhausted, and made their way as quickly as they could to their hotel, for they had still an hour to wait before their train was due. Angelo could scarcely bear up at all. They ordered a little light refreshment, and were just sitting down, when one of the waiters came up to Mr. Moorhouse and said that there was a man at the door who insisted upon seeing him. He told him that he was not to allow anyone to intrude, but the man persisted.

'Show him in, then,' answered Mr. Moorhouse.

The man entered and walked up to Mr. Moorhouse, holding out his hand.

'You have the advantage of-Why, it's Mr. Kepworth,

if I am not mistaken!' he exclaimed hesitatingly.

'You're right,' answered Jonathan; 'and I'm so glad to see you taking such an interest—such a great interest—in Charlie's children. I saw the name in the papers a fortnight ago. My suspicions were aroused, but I did not like to write you, after all these years of silence. I found out when the trial was to come off, and I came to see for myself. You've proved a father to my nephew and niece, John; sh—shall we be reasonable friends again?' he asked brokenly.

'Certainly, my dear fellow,' replied Mr. Moorhouse, as he wrung his hand in real Yorkshire fashion. 'Marian, your Uncle Jonathan; Angelo, your father's brother. My wife you have met before. Mr. and Miss Llewellyn. These two gentlemen are Charlie's executors, and have been most faithful to

their trust.'

When they had settled down, Mr. Moorhouse asked:

'Where are you staying?'

'I put up last night at an hotel down the street, near to Watergate, I think they call it. I intended to return this afternoon.'

'Surely your business does not demand your return so soon? Will you come on to Moor House and stay with us for a few

days?

Well—yes, I think I might stay until the end of the week, thank you. I can do a bit of business here. I should like a talk with you about a couple of engines I must have put in. Both our present ones are the worse for wear, and after what I have seen to-day I should not think of placing the order with any other firm. I have envied you to-day, John—pardon me

As they were travelling in the line like a huge Llangorse Lake, and far lonely whitewashed shep. 'There it is!' said R

had not seen it.

When they sat down Marian's eyes. Her Au some witty remark to cha

After dinner at Moor the drawing-room to talk Marian thought it best for old home in Surrey, for Aunt now.

'I should think not,' said what I should do without ye 'But I don't want Marian

jected Angelo. 'I mean a n 'I suppose she will have

with a knowing smile.
'That's too bad, Uncle!

want to lose my right-hand 'You need not fear,' an back and help you for sor feeling that I should like to

'That's a fresh develop
'Yet I think a squire-parsupon the parson-squire.



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'Then you could not have a better place than our old home,' said his sister. 'Old Mrs. Smith is still able to superintend the housekeeping, and I believe you would be very happy there.'

I should like to conquer on the very ground where I was defeated, and win the respect which the people had for our

minted parents,' said Angelo thoughtfully.

Dick's purposes were then discussed. He had made up his mind to go back to Leeds. He had consulted with Marian, and she was quite agreeable. Mr. Bowen did not wish to get married until he had a vicarage to which he might take his bride. He might have a year or so to wait, and in the meanime they might be doing a good work at St. John's.

'You see, he said, with a smile, 'if Ruth goes away to a bicarage, I know she will be happy. The Manor will need a seew mistress, and who is more likely than Miss Marian, so we

shall all be happy ever afterwards.'

'These young people have wiser heads than ours, and can

masily dispense with our advice,' said Mr. Porter.

'It is quite true,' answered Uncle Jonathan rather sadly.

But where do I come in? It seems that I am out of it, as I deserve to be.'

'Yes, you do come in, uncle dear,' replied Marian, as she tose and went over to where he was sitting. She began to fondly stroke his hair as she went on: 'You know that we hall often be coming to Yorkshire now, and——'

'Now that Dick's going back,' interrupted Mr. Moorhouse.

"'I was speaking, Uncle. You shouldn't interrupt,' said Marian, with well-feigned severity. 'We will come to see you, Uncle Jonathan, and do what we can to make your life brighter.'

"Who's we?' he asked, a pleasant smile playing upon his

ace.

"Why, Auntie and Ruth and I. We had planned a long trip just when the calamity came, which spoiled it all; and although it has been postponed, I don't see why it should be bandoned. I should so much like to see your Yorkshire tales, and moors, and heather.'

'You shall see all if you will only come, and have the best hat I can give. You will all be heartily welcome. Will you

nome as well, Angelo?'

'I should like to come for a few days now and then, for I should like to see some of father's work very much; but

am determined to make up as much as possible for lost

I have been wondering,' said Dick, 'what we shall do with secret dungeon, for I don't think that we shall have any ther use for it.'

Send it to the British Museum,' exclaimed Mr. Bowen,

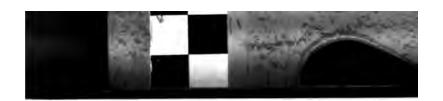
owing aside a magazine he had been looking over.

Those who had not been to the Manor were most anxious see the dungeon, so Ruth invited the whole party to dinner the following evening. She would ask her brother to ate its history to them so far as he knew it. The visitors re delighted with the idea, and thanked Ruth for the itation.

The executors were rather stiff with Angelo, but this dually wore off, and by the end of the week, by the infectious dness and tact of their host and hostess, they were the best friends.

The following day the weather was delightfully fine and using, and the gentlemen went for a long climb up one of hills

The trees were already covered with various tints of green, ture was once more bursting forth into life and beauty, e strangers were delighted with the magnificent scenery,



CHAPTER XXXIII

A BACHELOR'S MANSION

THE trio sat for nearly an hour on the sunny lawn, discussing the possibility of mineral wealth in the bowels of the Black Mountains, a subject that had been suggested by one of the visitors in the morning. They had almost exhausted their speculations when Mr. Bowen exclaimed:

' Here's Mr. Thirdly coming up the drive!'

The cause of Mr. Bowen's surprise was that Mr. Moorhouse had told him that the rector had not visited them or conversed with any of them for months. The fact was that somehow he felt out of touch with these people. He admitted that they were not bad, in some respects they were positively good; but he was also conscious of some mysterious difference which he could not define. He knew they did not like his sermons or his ritualistic practices, although they never complained. They came to church, it was true, but in his opinion it was not because they enjoyed the services, or that they were spiritually enriched by them; they came, he felt sure, only as a matter of duty.

He blamed them at first, and was angry at the attitude they assumed; but when he saw that they refrained from unkind criticisms, that they would not indulge in, or be the carriers of, parochial gossip, and that they quietly and unostentatiously did all the good they could, he could not understand them at all. If they had opposed him, spoken ill of him, he could have retaliated and have fought if necessary, but instead of this they helped, they gave, and encouraged with practical sympathy every good work. It was true that they helped the Dissenters whom he detested. They said that these people were Christians, which he had great cause to doubt, and that

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se chapel people were doing good work. It was true that my drunkards and poachers had been converted and were v steady, God-fearing men; but had they not been baptized confirmed? And had not this something to do with their formation? There were people coming to church now who er came formerly, except to a baptism, a funeral, or a dding. They had been visited by the Moorhouse-Llewellyn jue, had been helped by them, and, they said, pointed to Saviour.

These people were always complaining, saying they wanted Gospel, they wanted spiritual food. Did he not give them Gospel? Did people come to church to hear him talk? For not the Sacraments sufficient for them? What more did y want? Yet somehow he got little satisfaction from this dof reasoning. He knew that he was either drifting away from my of his congregation, or they from him. He was convinced to they were needing more than he could give them. Was reation the cause of this cleavage? It might be: for he was that he had not read much for many years. Never, in the think they were needing more than he could give them. Was reation the cause of this cleavage? It might be: for he was that he had not read much for many years. Never, in the think way, behind the times? No; this explanation not satisfy him. He was driven to admit that there was ween him and many of his congregation an undefinable

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'No, no; I would rather you remained,' replied the rector hurriedly.

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Mr. Bowen sat down again, somewhat reluctantly, for he felt that if there was going to be any unpleasantness he would

rather be out of it.

Mr. Thirdly then told them what had been passing through his mind—of his uncomfortable experiences, and the criticisms he had heard.

'But you don't accuse us of disloyalty, Mr. Thirdly?' asked

Mr. Moorhouse firmly.

'I do not,' he answered with emphasis. 'All I say is, that somehow, unconsciously, perhaps, you have introduced into my parish an element of some mysterious kind with which I am not in sympathy.'

'Your parish, Mr. Thirdly. I thought the parish belonged

to the people, or that the people constituted the parish.'

'That is your democratic way of looking at it, sir; I tell you it is my parish.'

'Well, we'll leave that, for I do not want to quarrel,

Mr. Thirdly. What is the cause of your complaint?'

'I complain only of the introduction of a spirit and a longing into the hearts of my parishioners for what they call spiritual food, and they have told me candidly if I don't

give it to them they will go where they can get it.

'I thought it was a clergyman's duty and happiness to feed his flock with spiritual food. There are hundreds of clergymen in this country who would give all they possess—which is not much, perhaps—if they could see this hungering and thirsting after righteousness among their parishioners. I thought that you, as a clergyman, were instituted and inducted to a cure of souls.'

'So I was; but if they are not satisfied with my remedies, what am I to do? They say they will not take my medicine because it is not of the right kind and does them no good. I confess that I cannot diagnose their complaint; but I'm not supposed to be able to explain every psychological difficulty which may arise, or find a cure for all the ills which may result from prejudice and dissatisfaction. I am here to administer the Sacraments, and I have done so, for anything I know, fairly regularly.'

'I don't think that any spiritual difficulty has arisen since I have been in the parish which is not referred to in the New

Testament.'

Perhaps not; but I am not responsible for what is in the w Testament. As I told you before, I was never fond of

ology-in fact, I detest it.'

I don't think that your difficulty is a theological one at all, hould rather think that what they mean is, that they want Gospel story of redemption, atonement, and resurrection ached in simplicity and in the power of the Holy Ghost, ey want to feel that their rector is in sympathy with all ritual work, and desirous of winning souls for God. Some them, as you know, have given full proof that they have in "born from above." They want food, spiritual food, for soul's sustenance and development."

Then, if they want more than the Sacraments, I cannot

e it.'

You cannot?' questioned Mr. Bowen sadly, with a pained ression upon his face. 'Surely, Mr. Thirdly, you can tell m of God's infinite love and compassion—tell them about entance, faith and prayer, the sacrificial death of our deemer, and the power of His resurrection; then of the raments.'

Put first things first, Mr. Bowen, please.'

I thought I was doing that. This, I think, is the order in ch they are found in the New Testament.'

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you admit it has been a failure. I should try the other; and, as I read, see if there was any question about the New Birth and the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ which I could not answer in the affirmative. If there were, I should honestly confess that I was to blame.'

'But you are reversing the order. I have not to confess to

the people, but they to me.'

Well, if that is your position, if you mean to do the work of Rome, I think your only honest course is to eat the bread of Rome, and not take Protestant money with which to do Rome's work.'

'Do you mean to insult me?'

'I don't. I am only telling you what, in all honesty, I should feel bound to.'

'Do you hold the same opinions?' asked Mr. Thirdly, turning to Mr. Moorhouse.

'Certainly I do,' he replied.

'I suppose you hold the same opinions as your friends?' he asked, turning to Dick.

'Certainly,' answered Dick.

'Then I shall resign my living,' he said hotly, as he rose and, with a stiff bow, bade them good afternoon.

He turned and walked down the drive as quickly as he could.

On the following Saturday the party broke up once more. Angelo went back to Surrey with the executors, and was soon

comfortably settled in his old home.

His old nurse was delighted at the change in his character. She told him how closely she had followed the papers, and how delighted she was that he had been acquitted. As he looked once more upon the beautiful paintings executed by his departed parents, his past ingratitude and wickedness would come up before him with almost overwhelming force. Though he knew that God had pardoned him, yet he could not escape the memory of his evil deeds. The first few days he suffered almost as severely as he had done in jail, for everything around him seemed to say, 'You broke the hearts of your parents, you persecuted your sister, you ruined the happiest of homes.' was not until he got absorbed in his work, trying his utmost to atone for the past, that he felt any real peace of mind.

Mr. Moorhouse had promised to take his wife and Marian into Surrey to spend a week or two. This promise was fulfilled about ten days after the events just recorded. To say

t Mrs. Smith was delighted to meet Marian again would be very inadequately express her feelings. Shortly after their val, Miss Porter, an old playmate and schoolfellow of rian's, drove up in a neat little pony-chaise, saying how ry she was not to be in time to welcome her back to her home and friends. She had been sent, she said, especially invite them to dinner, but she should have come in any e to welcome her old friend. Her father had talked of no else but Mr. and Mrs. Moorhouse since his return, so she anxious to meet them.

Dick returned with Mr. Bowen to Leeds, where they consed their work with renewed zeal. They were both more oular than they had ever been before, and they took antage of this opportunity to bring more men and women personal contact with the Saviour. The work progressed leaps and bounds, but this did not spoil them, or cause m to lose their heads. They had no thoughts of self-randisement, no vain, ambitious desires, no self-seeking tives; consequently, they built not only rapidly, but solidly, k was not only taking a fair share of the work, but also ding hard for the Trinity examination, and his efforts in this action were crowned with success.

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us in Surrey, and was saying good-bye at the station, he gave her a very pressing invitation. Leave it to me; I'll write him at once. I know what he'll say, and if we girls don't put some life into that bachelor's mansion it won't be our fault.'

'Don't get frivolous, my dear,' said Auntie.

'I don't intend to, Auntie. Indeed, I must not do so now that my affianced husband is going to be ordained. Dear old Dick! But you know Uncle Jonathan's place must be awfully dull. He told me all about it when he was here, and in such sepulchral tones that I nearly laughed in his face.'

Marian!

'It's quite true, Auntie. Perhaps he has never told you how he lives. When you meet him again ask him how he manages to exist in that dreary bachelor's castle, and if he tells you the story as he told it to me then I'll warrant you won't keep your gravity.'

Marian had a reply by return of post to say that he would be more than delighted to have the lot; but he wished they had given him more time to get his place ready. They would

have to take him as they found him.

No sooner had Uncle Jonathan received Marian's letter than he had his whole place in confusion both inside and out. He first summoned the old housekeeper, butler, and servants, and made the astounding announcement that he was going to have some visitors, including some ladies. This almost took away their breath, and when he asked a question, not one of them could answer him. They had a suspicion which they did not express until they got back into the kitchen. Then the old butler started off by saying:

'Awm sewer th' maister's goan off his nut!'

After they had discussed the pros and cons of the situation, and had fully expressed their different opinions, the house-keeper went over her bewildering list of orders, and assumed an attitude of authority. Just then there was a loud knock at the kitchen door, and there stood painters, decorators, and whitewashers. There appeared almost simultaneously three or four labourers from the mill, saying that they had been sent up to help move the furniture.

'I think you'll have a difficult job,' said one of the painters, laughing. 'I should think the furniture and rooms are grown together by this time; at least, they've never been put asunder

in the memory of any living man.



You hold your tongue, said the housekeeper savagely.

Awm thankful to say aw don't; but aw'll tell yo what aw wah, et this place ez net hed a blessed bit ev paint fer nty yeear.'

I know it has, then,' replied the housekeeper hotly.

Net inside,' said the man doggedly.

he housekeeper tossed her head and turned away to give ers to the men who had been sent up to move the furniture. Ty soon got two or three rooms cleared, and no sooner were carpets up than the men were in with their trestles and also doing the ceilings.

he outdoor men and gardeners were kept busy too, and Kepworth was strutting about at all hours and in all

ces.

The servants could not imagine what had come over their ster. He was usually silent, gruff, and domineering, but was going about now, smiling, and actually encouraging se engaged in the work, and one of the servants said she sure she had heard him humming a tune. But none of rest would believe her, saying that she had dreamt it. The gossip of the servants had been passed on to the ratives at the mills, and all kinds of rumours were affoat.

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'and I am sure a great change for the better has come over him.'

'There has,' answered her husband. 'See! there's your dear old home, sweet in our memories still, though occupied

by strangers.'

'That is where dear old Uncle John did his billing and cooing and wooing,' said Marian to Ruth and Miss Porter; but her lip quivered as she saw her Auntie wiping the glistening

tears from her eyes.

They were all glad when the train drew up at their destination. Uncle Kepworth had been pacing the platform impatiently for the last fifteen minutes, and when Marian put her head out of the window she saw his beaming face as he came forward to open the carriage door.

'I've brought the brougham and the wagonette,' he said; 'I hope there will be room for all. There is a cart here to

take up the luggage.'

'How kind of you, dear old Uncle Jonathan,' said Marian, as she kissed him. He looked round shamefacedly to see if anyone was looking, for this was probably the first time that he had been kissed since he was a baby, and now to be operated upon, of all places, on a railway platform! He blushed and stammered and helped the rest of the ladies to alight. His coachman had seen what had taken place, and was most anxious to get back to the hall to astonish the servants.

'This will be the greatest shocker they've had yet,' he said to himself. 'If this be the bride, she's too young and too

handsome for the master.'

'Where are the clergymen?' asked Uncle Jonathan.

'One is in Ripon. The other met us in Leeds, where we had to change, and said he was sorry he could not come on with us, as he had a funeral to attend. He will join us to-morrow afternoon on our way to Ripon.'

The ladies rode up in the brougham, the gentlemen in the

wagonette.

'We must be living wonders of some kind, or oddities, or curiosities, I know not which,' said Marian, 'but look how the

people are staring at us!'

Had Marian known how matters stood she would have been the first to excuse them, for no strangers had ever been known to stay a night at the hall since it was built, now over fifty years ago. Old Kepworth, as Jonathan was now called, was considered to be as close-fisted as his father before him. It

often said that if ever the smoke nuisance was removed Kepworth would be the man to find out how to consume own smoke, for he could not 'thoil' to part with it! He opened his heart wonderfully of late, though, they said had actually been spending money on bric-à-brac, silver bronze ornaments, antimacassars, and curlers! He had bought expensive shrubs for the grounds and rare plants the conservatory, and he had not imposed a single extra on any of the weavers!

There's a delightful smell of paint,' said Marian to s Porter as they went up to their rooms. Then she added a smile, 'We shall have to wait until the cart arrives

ore we can dress; it's just like a man!

When Marian had been shown into her room and had taken her dust-cloak and hat, she was in the act of putting the s on her dressing-table when her keen eye caught sight of elaborately embellished cardboard box. Her curiosity being used, she opened it, and then burst into an uncontrollable of laughter. She took the box and went into Ruth's room, down on the sofa, and burst out again.

Whatever's the matter?' asked Ruth, opening wide her

c, serious eyes.

Has Uncle supplied you with curlers as well?' asked



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was sitting next to him, and just as he was about to rise she said:

'Uncle dear, you have bought some delightful ornaments, pictures, and things. Would you give us permission to rearrange them according to our taste?'

'With pleasure,' he answered. 'I give you carte blanche. Do just as you like. Treat this as your home; it is your home

if you wish to make it so.'

Marian, with gentle tact, told the housekeeper how well she had done this, that, and the other; but that she and her friends would like, with her permission, to rearrange a few things. The three young ladies worked like Trojans, and by twelve o'clock they had finished the drawing-room, dining-room, and hall. They had just asked one of the servants to take the steps away, and were standing discussing the effects of a certain combination, when Uncle came bustling in.

'Uncle,' said Marian, as she placed her arm through his,

'now tell me if you see any difference.'

She took him to the dining-room and then into the drawing-room.

'I can't understand it,' he said, with a puzzled expression upon his countenance. 'You have not had any additional things, yet there seem more and the change is wonderful—really wonderful. You three fairies must possess some secret magic wand,' he added, with a satisfied smile.

We had no music last night, Marian,' he went on. 'We've half an hour before lunch. Will you try this new piano I

bought?'

Marian sat down and her fingers glided over the keys. She played a short piece from memory, and then looked up at him and said:

'This is the finest instrument I have ever touched, Uncle.

It is splendid.'

'Then you two will go well together,' he said, adding in a whisper, 'I bought it for one of your wedding presents.'

She rose and kissed him, and again he blushed like a country youth of sixteen, as he asked tenderly:

'Will you sing me one of your songs?'

'With pleasure, Uncle; are you fond of music?'

'Very.

Ruth told Marian after lunch that she had never heard her sing before as she had sung for her Uncle.

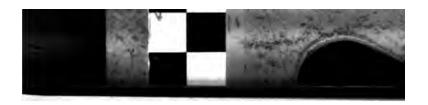
Uncle Jonathan accompanied them to Ripon, and was with

marriage. Uncle had had Brother and sister both wept contemplation, thinking of spirit in which the work had gave them their value in the not so much the ability that w They were more to them than

When August came round at Moor House and the Man Miss Porter, and Uncle Jonath it became evident that there we friendship between Miss Port and declared that she was no longer, so she went off with the said that he thought it was ab for he had been feeling quite. Jonathan had been rabid mono

The month passed away all t old. They did not often ment it was generally to pity poor Parmoor or Wormwood Scrubs. He the town, no one knew where. were leaving, they received an a pound notes enclosed. They he the notes came from, and no on except Marian and Mr. Moorho ness to Hereford, and had poste

The Boat Club had made



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assistants were given four hours' holiday while the races were taking place. Their masters could not give them more, for they expected to do a good trade with such an exceptional crowd, nor were they disappointed.

This regatta put the Club on its feet. Everything had been in its favour, and the results were highly satisfactory. The net gains looked all the better when Uncle Kepworth's cheque for

ten pounds was added to the actual takings.

CHAPTER XXXIV

A DOUBLE WEDDING

VERAL months passed away, and spring came once more ture budded out again into resurrection and life. The cupants of Moor House had just finished their breakfast, if were about to rise from the table, when Mr. Moorhouse wone of the magistrates hurry past the window to the hall or.

I hope there is nothing wrong,' he said, 'but Mr. Stephens ems in a dreadful hurry.'

They went at once into the library, that they might be ready receive him when he was shown in.

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were that Parchment had passed away impenitent, but it was

only what he had expected.

'The same post that brought me the news of Parchment's death,' he wrote, 'also brought me the offer of an important living in Birmingham. I shall go and look over the parish to-morrow, and will come on and spend a few days with you, accompanied by the Rev. Dick. My only anxiety at present is where to find a successor to carry on the work at St. John's, if I should decide to leave.'

Mr. Bowen and Dick went to see the parish, and the former decided to accept the offer of the trustees. They went on to Hay, arriving by the nine o'clock train. On the following morning when Dick entered the breakfast-room at the Manor—they seldom used the large dining-hall when they were alone—he found a letter beside his plate.

'Why, this is from Mr. Thirdly,' he said, recognizing the handwriting. He tore open the envelope, and then exclaimed: 'Why, he's leaving! This is his formal resignation to me as patron.'

'Shall we go down to Moor House, Ruth, and talk the matter over with them after breakfast?'

'Why?

'Because I think we ought to be very careful about a successor, and they will be able to advise us for the best, and

probably be able to recommend a suitable man.'

The company at Moor House were somewhat surprised to see the brother and sister coming so early. They knew that something must have happened that demanded immediate attention. They had lingered, chatting pleasantly over their meal, and the visitors came straight into the dining-room to see them.

'You are a party of late scholars, anyhow,' was Dick's greeting.

'We've been sitting here for the last half-hour,' answered Uncle, 'discussing the Birmingham parish, which has been offered to the detective here; and the probability of an early marriage,' he added, looking at Ruth with a merry twinkle in his eye.

'There's another living vacant, too; that's what we've come

about so early,' said Dick. 'Read that.'

He handed the letter to Mr. Moorhouse, who asked, when he saw whom it was from:

'Shall I read it out?'

^{&#}x27;Certainly,' replied Dick.

When the letter had been read Mrs. Moorhouse exclaimed: Now we shall have the Gospel preached in our dear little

By whom?' asked Ruth.

' By our own dear Dick,' answered Mrs. Moorhouse, as she se and stepped up to him, putting her hands upon his oulders, and looking up appealingly into his face, as much to say, 'Don't refuse.'

He blushed and stammered and hesitated, but at last inaged to blurt out:

'Alf and I have been talking about St. John's, and who is carry on the work there, and he thought that I was most

But what about the Manor now that Ruth will be leaving? I confess matters are somewhat complicated. It does m strange,' replied Dick, looking thoughtful and perplexed. Perhaps God has been preparing you for this, Dick,

gested his sister.
I don't know. Perhaps He has. What do you say, Alf?' I hardly know what to say, but I think it will be best to low what you feel to be the leading of God's Holy Spirit. id not mention it before when we were discussing the work at

A DOUBLE WEDDING

at least, some of them. I like to act as Lady Bountiful among

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the people who have tried to help themselves, but failed to make ends meet. I love the hills, the trees, the flowers, and to look upon the world as God made it, not where man has polluted it to such an extent that you have to peer through a pall of smoke to see your companions. I could not be content in an environment of grime and dirt and self-inflicted poverty. You spoke a moment ago about "the living" of Cusop being vacant. I think you would have been nearer the mark if you had said "the starvation," for no man with a family could live upon the income. We should have to look for some one with private means—a state of things which ought never to exist. When Dick and I are married, what's his will be mine, and what's mine will be my own, for he will promise faithfully at the altar "with all my worldly goods I thee endow"; between us we shall have enough and to spare. What I suggest is, that, if the Bishop will agree, Dick should undertake the living of Cusop, and let the whole of the stipend go into the diocesan fund for the augmentation of the poor livings with which the diocese abounds. Our personal needs are not great, so we shall have enough and to spare without the stipend. I will willingly give up all I have got for this purpose, for I know that Dick will be happier in his old home. There's a speech for you! Never say again that I am not an orator!'

'You are a dear, sensible creature,' said her Aunt; 'but if we did not know you better we should think from your remarks that you were not in full sympathy with the poor and the needy.'

'You know I am, Auntie dear,' said Marian, as she put her arm round her. 'We shall now be able to carry out together the good work we have planned, for I am sure that Dick will accept and that the Bishop will agree.'

Dick was eventually led to decide in favour of undertaking the work. He wrote at once to the Bishop, who was delighted with the proposal. Mr. Bowen and Dick called to see him on their way back to Leeds, and everything was settled.

As the month of August drew near again, great preparations were being made for the coming event—a double wedding. It was already known that Dick was to be the new rector, and a more popular appointment could not have been made, judging from remarks that our friends were constantly hearing. It was rumoured that Mr. Thirdly was about to enter the Church of Rome, and this became an established fact a few

weeks later. The Boat Club had put their annual regatta a



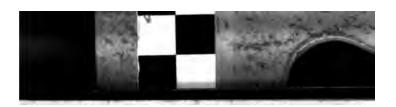
night earlier, so that it might come a day before the ivities which were being arranged for at Moor House, ien the visitors arrived, those who been there before exsed their opinion that the house and grounds looked more sutiful than ever. This was quite true, for Mother Nature I healed up all the scars which had been made by the trations; trailing creepers had covered up parts of the new kery, and plants, shrubs, and trees had grown taller, reving the artificial appearance which had been so manifest ing the first year.

Fickets for dinner and tea had been issued to all the rateers of Hay and the parishioners of Cusop. A company of obats had been engaged, and sports of all kinds had been inged. There was to be a balloon ascent, a military band to supply the music, and there was to be a grand display fireworks at night, when the grounds would be lit up with stric fairy-lamps. The grounds were to be thrown open to

who wished to enter.

viany of the parishioners busied themselves in decorating the irch, and vying with each other who could do most to your the brides and bridegrooms.

When all the visitors had arrived, Moor House and the nor, as well as the hotels in town, were filled to overflowing.



A DOUBLE WEDDING

lifted the crate addressed to Marian off the wagon, Angelo turned to the wagoner and said:

'Don't try to lift off the other until we come. I think we shall be up by the time you arrive; but, if not, wait, please.'

'All right, sir,' said the man, touching his cap and pocketing half a crown.

When the case was opened and the straw removed, the ladies and gentlemen uttered an exclamation of surprise. There before them, beautifully sculptured on a huge white marble slab, was a representation of the Brecon Beacons and the lonely shepherd's cottage. Above it was an angel with extended wings, and a little below, another, with sword and shield, stood on the mountain path, as if ready to defend the dwellers of this lonely habitation. The conception was so realistic, the delicacy of the work so exquisite, that it won the approbation of all. With tears streaming down her cheeks, Marian went and fondly kissed her brother.

'Marian,' he said, 'I ought not to have done this. I did not want to cause your tears to flow on what ought to be the happiest day of your life.'

They are not tears of sorrow, Angelo; but of thankfulness

and joy.

'This is all I have to give you and Dick,' he said brokenly.

'It is my best.'

The gentlemen hurried off to the Manor to unload the other case, and Marian and Miss Porter, anxious to know what the other was like, followed them. As they arrived on the scene, Angelo was carefully taking off one side of the crate. There were two scenes depicted on this marble. In the upper was a crowd of people and a noble, apostolic-looking preacher, calling them to repentance. Some of them were weeping, others had their heads bowed as if in deep thought, meditation, or prayer; some seemed careless and indifferent, and a few coarser-looking than the rest were in the act of throwing stones, one of which was falling upon the head of the preacher. Angels were hovering over the scene as if waiting to escort the martyr's spirit to the realms of the blest. The lower scene was the Martyr's Grave beside the little church. A young woman was kneeling upon the flat tombstone with upturned face, as if in prayer, and a young man was approaching with head bent, as if in sorrow. Angels were hovering round the top of the old yew-tree with harps and trumpets, ready to rejoice at the return of the prodigal, and to carry the tidings home.

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Dick gazed as one lost to all that was passing around. He tathed hard for a few moments, and then sobbed.

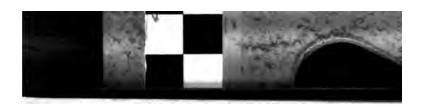
Yes, Angelo,' he said, with quivering lip; 'that prayer was and and answered; the prodigal did return, and will always ive to repay the loving Father who received him.'

Ruth's feelings were too deep for words; all she could do s to take hold of the hand of Angelo and the hand of her other, saying:

By the grace of God, one in Christ Jesus.'

Angelo had worked for some months almost day and night get the marbles finished, but he was amply repaid. These o unique wedding presents were the admiration of all. They k Ruth's back to Moor House for inspection, and placed em both in the tent along with the other gifts. The townsople who knew the stories were moved to tears when they ked upon the scenes there depicted.

The marriage had been fixed for noon at the request of me of the guests who had not been able to come the day fore, and this hour fitted in admirably with the other events. The little church was crowded to its utmost capacity, and the me ground in the churchyard was filled with people who ald not possibly gain admission. The church was most totally and artistically described.



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They had said that they wanted a simple village wedding, and they admitted that they could have had nothing better than this.

The crowd followed quickly after the carriages, and they

were soon all gathered in the park.

One of the first to congratulate the brides and bridegrooms was Detective-Sergeant Johnson, now of Scotland Yard, who was one of the invited guests. Many appreciative words were spoken, and many encomiums passed upon the young people who had that day been united for better, for worse; but it was Mr. Moorhouse who received the greatest surprise. When he thought the 'speechifying,' as he called it, was over, Stephens, the magistrate, stepped on the platform and said that he had a very pleasing duty to perform on behalf of his fellow-townsmen. This was the occasion for a roar of applause, as if the people thought that they were now going to have their innings.

Mr. Stephens went on:

'Many kind words have been spoken about the young people, with which I heartily agree. No one regrets the loss of Miss Llewellyn more than I; but we must not complain. for we are getting an excellent substitute. (Loud applause.) We have not known Mrs. Llewellyn a very long time; but I think she has won the confidence of all, and has been second to none in every good work. I shall be very glad to welcome back, not only the Squire and his wife, but the rector and his wife (loud applause), when they return from their honeymoon. I might also take this opportunity, on your behalf, of wishing success to the Reverend and Mrs. Bowen in the new and higher sphere of labour to which God has called them. (Applause.) I hope you will pardon this digression; I did not mount this platform to speak about the young brides and bridegrooms, but (pointing to Mr. and Mrs. Moorhouse) to hand to the hero and heroine sitting here (deafening applause) a token of our respect and admiration for what they are and for what they have done. These two noble, true-hearted people have taught us lessons that we shall never forget; they have taught us what real sympathy is, what integrity is. They have proved a blessing to the town and neighbourhood. Some envious people have said that it is because of their wealth that they are so popular and beloved. This, in my humble opinion, is not the case. It is something more than wealth that we honour: it is character.'

neighbourhood, to preser gift of rich and poor, pu tions, which range from c Mrs. Moorhouse, let m gathered here and a few coffee service. You have taught us so much that w little recognition, and we tunity."

Another loud outburst c Mr. Moorhouse stepped he was unable to find word

'I hardly know how to to this, another token of you that I have tried to do my fame or reward, but, as opport of some of them. I feel not for two things—for the symposorrow, and for the honour you feel to the cost of this day's festivition our sorrow and you should what a help your sympathy when that awful cloud was give us these beautiful things, remind us of you, though them.'

'The weir and the boats.' sl

A DOUBLE WEDDING

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'Oh, stop, please. You will make us vain. I thank you for this expression of your appreciation both on behalf of my wife and myself. We have a great many attractions to-day, and no doubt many of you are hungry. I will close my remarks by saying that the best of us are the best by the grace of God, and I want you to recognize that every good and perfect gift cometh from Him.'

After the speeches, the townspeople went off to the huge tents which had been erected for the refreshments. There was a smaller tent for the guests, and Uncle Jonathan, deep in thought, walked to his place and sat with bowed head, as if he were either ashamed of himself or making new plans for the future.

He was roused by Mr. Bowen asking:

'Uncle Jonathan, what is the meaning of this?' as he held an envelope in one hand and a cheque for five thousand pounds, which he had found beside his plate, in the other.

'I feel like making it ten,' said Uncle Jonathan, looking up, 'for I have just been thinking what an awful miser I have been for the last twenty years. You are heartily welcome to it, Alf. You have done a great deal for my nephew and niece; they said they had enough money for their personal needs, but they told me that you ought to have some reward for all that you had done for them, and that the furnishing of the vicarage had been an expensive item. You are welcome to it, my dear fellow. See, they are all waiting for you to get to your place.'

The happy couples left by the two o'clock train, Mr. Bowen and his bride going to Switzerland, while Dick and Marian were going to spend a fortnight looking at the art treasures on the Continent. They had arranged to meet the others at the end of that time, so that they might go on to Egypt and Palestine together.

It was August, ten years after the double wedding. Preparations had been made for another annual holiday. The large dining-room table at Moor House was not large enough now, so a smaller one had been placed at the upper end of the room for the juveniles.

Canon Bowen, with his wife and children, had just arrived from Birmingham along with Angelo, who had also brought his wife (once Miss Porter) and two children. They had met

THE SINS OF THE FATHERS

Hereford, and had come on together. The Rector of Cusop is, of course, on the spot, and his wife was busy helping the se to make the children look as pretty as possible to meet ir little cousins at the dinner-party in the evening. Dinner I been fixed for six, so that young and old might keep up anniversary of the double wedding.

Uncle Jonathan and Mrs. Kepworth, for he had also taken to himself a wife, had come along with Herbert and his nily from the North; and when the party gathered in the ing-room, it was a happy one indeed. Both young and old

ered with zest into the spirit of the occasion.

The frosts of ten winters had whitened the hair of Mr. and s. Moorhouse and Uncle Jonathan, but otherwise they showed le change. They were as happy and genial as ever. Uncle nathan had many interesting stories to relate about his periences as churchwarden, of the good which had resulted m the cottage hospital which he had built, and of the new chanics' institute and free library in the village. His wife s a devout Christian lady, and one who took a deep interest the physical, moral, and spiritual welfare of the people gelo had already become famous as a sculptor, and s beginning to reap a good harvest from his arduous



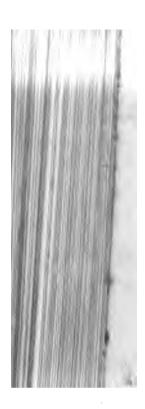
A DOUBLE WEDDING

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gentle zephyrs were making dreamy music in the trees. He rose to his feet and said, his face radiant with triumph:

'I have listened to your reminiscences and experiences with great pleasure and satisfaction, and I can see how completely the power of Christ's resurrection has been victorious over "the sins of the fathers."

THE END









The Sins of the Fathers

The Wye Valley Mystery.

By

THOMAS WALTON.

This is not a sensational novel, but a story of great interest, told in an easy, natural manner. The genuineness of the types of character portrayed in it is, indeed, remarkable; the heroes bring us face to face with many phases of life, and present to us a graphic and inspiring picture of the actual struggles through which victorious characters must go. The struggles and conflicts, successes and failures, are intensely human. The plot is well laid, and is full of tragedy and humour, yet there is nothing impossible, far-fetched, or distasteful, in it. Throughout the book we see good and evil striving for the mastery; the conflict is keen, but goodness ultimately prevails. The often-neglected truth, the power of the Christ-life, to enable men and women to overcome evil hereditary tendencies, is very clearly brought out. It is believed there is not a dull page in the book; indeed, it becomes more absorbing as we proceed towards the end. The book will no doubt feceive a warm welcome into many Christian homes, and will be hailed with gladness by both young and old, for its sympathies are broad and its

there are so many novels of a questionable character placed before the public. The Keighley News.

"The Sins of the Fathers," is, in some respects, a thrilling tale, and does not lack either characters or incidents; but we are glad when the end comes that virtue has triumphed, and that vice has gone to the wall, or, rather, to penal servitude. The story is a pleasant one, artlessly told." Western Mail.

"A good Sunday afternoon book," Review of Reviews
"A pleasant novel of English domestic life, quite

suitable for a parish library. The book supplies a

real want. Church Family Newspaper,

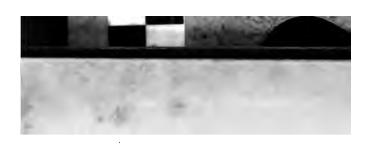
"This tale of the Midlands has a strong Protestant and Evangelical tone. The author is evidently a little too undenominational for some churchmen, but he shows how the ritualist, no less than the Squarson, turns pious parishioners regretfully but surely into Nonconformists. As a novel the book tells the story of ancient houses ruined by drink, gambling, and evil living; while in their place rise honest, liberal, hard-headed mill owners from Leeds who have plenty of money, and, in this case, plenty of genuine godliness. Some of the descriptive bits show real taste for the beauties of nature, and even a touch of the artistic temperament." The Record.

"Many people who are happy in the possession of old-fashioned tastes will be glad to browse through Mr. Walton's story and find there a soothing mid-Victorian flavour rarely met with nowadays. The tale is slightly touched with tragedy, but a shrewd. homely humour pervades the dialogue. Right and

Chapter 1—Bowen. 3—Moo
The Moor House an
Moorhouse make
Martyr's Grave.
Bours. 10—Mr. E
Death. 12—The
Treasure. 13—S
14—A Pleasant
16—The Lovers
18—Mr. Bowen
Marian's History
Missing. 22—A
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